"My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (St. Matt. xxvi. 39.)

Acad

Thoughts on the Religious Life

REFLECTIONS

On the General Principles of the Religious Life, on Perfect Charity the End of the Religious Life, on Vocation, the Vows, the Rules, the Cloister Virtues and the Main Devotions of the Church

WITH AN APPENDIX OF

Maxims and Counsels of Saints and Spiritual Writers

EDITED BY

Rev. F. X. Lasance

Author of "Prayer-book for Religious," "Visits to Jesus in the Tabernacle," etc., etc.

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Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

Foreword.

THOUGHTS ON THE RELIGIOUS LIFE is primarily intended as a book of spiritual reading for all our Sisterhoods without exception. We love them all and offer them this work as a tribute of our profound admiration and respect, in the hope that it may prove a source of encouragement and helpfulness to them in their life of sacrifice and sublime self-immolation on the altar of divine and fraternal charity.

The first volume of Basso's *Vollkommene Klosterfrau,* which treats of the religious life in general, forms the basis of the present work. On this basis we have built a superstructure consisting of a compilation of papers from various Catholic magazines, and articles from many books, relating to the spiritual life, the virtues and devotions belonging to the cloister. Basso's second volume, which treats specifically and in detail of the religious promise, the vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity, may some day be utilized by us for the construction of a sequel to REFLECTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS.

It is over two hundred years since Basso's excellent work on *The Perfect Religious* was first translated from the original Italian into German. The basis of the present English adaptation is an improved German edition of the work published in 1867, the preface of which reads as follows:

"*The Perfect Religious, or True Virtues of the Cloister,* by the Very Reverend Charles Andrew Basso, Provost of Trezzo, embodies, in language

clear and simple, a full exposition of the fundamental principles of holy Mother Church and the luminous teachings of her most approved spiritual writers on the cloistered life and the perfection to which a Religious is bound to aim; and therefore we deem it not a superfluous task to place it in the hands of German readers. It has been enlarged by the addition of some practical points of the interior life, taken from the writings of experienced spiritual directors.

"Although written ostensibly for female Religious, its pages, with very few exceptions, apply equally to the other sex, and even devout persons in the secular life may find instruction and edification in its perusal. The virtues are treated clearly and practically, and in a manner that incites the soul to their exercise.

"Confessors, whether intrusted with the guidance of souls leading the Christian life in the way of the Commandments, or of those under the holy vows of Religion, may find in Provost Basso's work ample direction for the wise execution of their difficult task.

"May Almighty God bless this work! May it prove an encouragement to zealous Religious to new and persevering efforts in the work of self-sanctification, and may it reawaken in tepid hearts their first love, that love which urged them in their early years to adopt the perfect life!"

Basso's work is certainly on a level with and perhaps a little above other well-known, popular spiritual books of its class. It is evidently from the pen of a spiritual man of wide experience; it reveals the author as one who speaks from intimate knowledge of the religious life; it makes no effort save to enlighten souls called to the state of perfection along the safe and sure road of humility and self-

denial. We have, however, excluded from the present adaptation a large amount of illustrative material, such as anecdotes from the Fathers, tales of marvelous visions and legends from the Lives of the Saints, which, though doubtless pleasing to pious souls, we deemed unsuited to the trend of the day, and incapable of standing in the searchlight of Bollandist criticism. It is regrettable that in the works of so many hagiologists, especially of the biographies of saints written in the Middle Ages, there is an overflow of the marvelous without any essay at criticism. As Giraud says in his *Life of St. Dominic:* "The historian should beware of exaggeration. Without denying the marvelous or the miraculous, it is his duty to weigh evidence, and, even though it should be necessary to set aside poetic and attractive legends, to accept that only which appears to be authentic."

The writer of spiritual books of any kind, as well as the biographer, should heed this admonition and carefully exclude what seems absurd and unauthentic.

We take this opportunity of expressing our sincere thanks to the editors, authors, and publishers, whose courtesy and generosity enabled us to embody in this work the articles credited to them.*

We trust that by gathering these instructive and interesting articles from so many eminent sources and adjusting them in the present setting, like precious stones from many lands, shaped and set in

*We thank, in particular, the reverend editors of *The American Ecclesiastical Review, The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament,* and *Emmanuel,* for the most generous concessions. We are, however, under the heaviest obligation to a Visitandine of Georgetown, D. C., who prepared the first draft of that part of the present work which is an adaptation from Basso.

a mosaic, we have done Religious a real service. In regard to both the compilation and the adaptation, which we regard as equally important features of the book, we confess that we have allowed ourselves great liberties in the choice of material and in the shaping of the same to suit our plan and purpose. Though intended primarily and principally for female Religious, this work is suited also to monks and to the various congregations of men that are bound by the religious promise.

We cherish the hope, moreover, and pray that since there seems to be a dearth of postulants in many of our convents, this book may fall into the hands of many young women, and, by the grace of God, be instrumental in rousing some from spiritual torpidity due to the blandishments of the world; in opening their eyes to the grandeur of the religious life, and the beauty of that enclosed garden of the Lord, where the fairest flowers of virtue—above all, the rose of charity—bloom in unsurpassed abundance and splendor of development; and in attracting them to that school of sanctity, where, as St. Bernard says, "Men lead a purer life, fall into sin less frequently, rise again more easily, walk more cautiously, rest more tranquilly, die more happily, and reap a richer reward for eternity." Where, like Mary, the soul may nestle securely in sweetest contemplation at the feet of Jesus, and, again, like Martha, be active in serving the Master's interests, in seeking to satisfy His thirst for souls by ministering to the temporal and spiritual needs of her neighbor, in imitation of His own example while He was on earth, when it was said of Him that He did all things well and went about doing good to all.

F. X. L.

Feast of St. Paul, First Hermit.
1907.

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PART I.

Vocation to the Religious Life.

CHAPTER I.

The Words Monk and Nun.

Souls called to perfection can not fulfil their vocation unless they understand the duties and obligations of that vocation. Although the meritorious works of a Religious must flow from the will, yet it is for the understanding, as its true guide, to direct the will in the choice of good and the avoidance of evil. The will, accordingly, chooses only after the understanding has shown it that an action is good or bad. The Royal Prophet prayed to know the divine law when he said: "Give me understanding, and I will search Thy law; and I will keep it with my whole heart" (Ps. cxviii. 34). God's revelation of Himself on Mount Sinai (Ex. xxxiv.) shows how necessary it is to know what He requires of us when calling us to His service and to the fulfilment of His holy will. All spiritual writers teach that, to attain perfection, besides setting high value on it, we must ardently desire it and spare no effort to attain it. But how can anything be valued at its real worth unless its worth is known? Precious stones are little prized by him who does not understand their value.

God says by the mouth of the Royal Prophet: "For I am the Lord, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Ps. lxxx. 11). The Psalmist signifies by these words that if the Israelites praise and serve

the Lord in thankful acknowledgment of His benefits, they will become worthy of new favors. They may also be applied to the Religious whom God has led out of Egypt—out of the snares of the world, so that she may devote herself wholly to Him who is to be her full inheritance.

A convent may very aptly be compared to the workshop of a goldsmith or jeweler. The Religious is a merchant in the business of the spiritual life. He, above all, must know the worth of his jewels. Ignorance would injure his business and reduce him to poverty. A man may be well-versed in rhetoric, physics, or any other branch of science; but if he is ignorant of the technicalities of his own special calling, the world will call him a fool. This holds good in respect to the spiritual life. Ignorance of its duties must lead to dire results. Dorotheus insinuated this to his disciple Dositheus, who was priding himself on the well-arranged beds of the sick of whom he had charge. He even hinted that none other could do these as well as himself. "Yes, brother," said Dorotheus, "the beds are done in masterly style. In case of necessity you would make an admirable valet. But it takes more than that to make a good Religious." And so a nun may be a good worker, a brilliant teacher, a skilful cook, a discreet portress, though she has not yet mounted the first round of the ladder of perfection. But if she understands her duties she will aim at the simple observance of the Rules and customs of her Order. Her very name, *monacha,* or nun, imposes the obligation of treading the way of perfection.

The word *monacha,* or nun, is derived from *monachus,* or monk. The ancients applied this term to a man who had forsaken all intercourse with the world in order to lead a solitary life. It became

customary among Christians, therefore, to designate as *monachi,* or monks, those that buried themselves in distant solitudes for undisturbed communion with God. Their abodes were called *monasteria,* that is, dwellings of solitaries. Although later these solitaries lived together in greater numbers and under the guidance of an abbot (which word, in Syriac, means father), they still retained the name of *monachi,* or monks, and their dwellings were called *cenobia,* places in which many dwell together in community, or *monasteria,* abodes for a solitary life. Philo says of the Egyptian monks that they led indeed a community life, but retired, mortified, and heavenly. Hence it follows that the name *monacha,* or nun, means a woman living retired from the world, which she has forsaken not only from love for the cloistered life, but also through the desire to live in community and devote herself entirely to God. The names of those who enter a cloister are changed, the hair is cut, and the religious habit is substituted for the secular dress—all of which symbolize absolute detachment from the world.

From the foregoing, a nun may readily understand the nature of her duties and the proper regulation of her life. If inclined to harbor distracting thoughts she should ask herself: "How can you encourage thoughts of the world—you who have forsaken it to consecrate yourself to God?" The words of St. Basil will form a fitting conclusion to this chapter: "A nun must be like a slave after she has become the property of her purchaser. She must no longer allow her thoughts to dwell on past freedom; all her efforts must tend to the punctual fulfilment of her Master's will." Happy the nun who serves God in this way, for thus to serve is to reign!

CHAPTER II.

The Essential Characteristic of a Perfect Religious Consists in a Truly Spiritual Life.

If even the word nun carries with it weighty obligations, that Religious is indeed foolish who imagines that the mere name and habit of Religion, without the discharge of the duties they impose, give her a right to eternal salvation.

St. Bernard says on this subject that many Christians glory in their name, and yet they will not be recognized by God as Catholic Christians, because their life does not correspond to the name they bear. If they do not fulfil the duties of Catholic Christians, their hope is vain. "I fear," says the holy Doctor, "that God will say to many Christians, 'You honor Me with your lips, but your heart is far from Me.'" And he continues: "Follow the will of Jesus Christ, and He will number you among His own." Truly spiritual are those Religious who are not content with assuming the habit and the vows, but keep the promises they have made and live in accordance with their state. That person can not be called spiritual whose morals and manners are not in accord with the name and the habit of a Religious. Entrance into Religion is a change from an imperfect to a perfect state. This change must not be of external appearance only. Interior conversion must precede it, as God teaches by the Prophet: "Be converted to Me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God" (Joel ii. 12, 13). St.

Bernard remarks on these words: "God says not only, 'Be converted to Me, and change a silken robe for a rough habit, a costly girdle for a leathern or a hempen one, worldly titles for a modest religious name;' but He demands an interior change, a true conversion of heart." The outward change is of little worth if not accompanied by the inward conversion.

Holy Scripture corroborates this statement. (1 Kings x.) After Samuel had, with all the accustomed ceremonies, anointed Saul king over the Israelites, he reminded him that, although the crown and scepter were his, God did not yet dwell in him. That distinction was not yet his. "The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be changed into another man," said Samuel to him. Neither the title nor the scepter nor the crown conferred the regal dignity, but only his own change of life and compliance with the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. So, too, neither by the habit nor by any ceremonies can a nun become a perfect Religious. Her perfection depends on her fidelity to the voice of the Holy Ghost and to her obligations. St. Augustine says: "The place does not make the saint, but an innocent life sanctifies both us and the place." What place is more holy than heaven? And yet many of the angels in heaven sinned and were cast into hell. Next to heaven, what place was holier than the earthly paradise in which so much happiness and so many blessings were prepared for our first parents? But despite the holiness of the place, they disobeyed God's command and sinned. A nun must not think her salvation secure because she has been received into a religious house.

A fur-lined cloak, no matter how rich and elegant, will not keep out the cold unless the body is warmed

by the natural heat of the wearer. Then it not only retains, but also increases that heat. No amount of clothing will warm a dead body, since its natural heat has departed with life. So the holiest religious habit will not help to salvation, unless she who wears it is glowing with the fire of God's love.

Those Religious who are satisfied with the name and habit are a hindrance to others striving after perfection. It is impossible for them to long hide the love of the world which still lurks in their heart. The Spirit of God will not be overcome by that of the world. As David could not move freely in the armor of Saul to which he was unaccustomed, neither can such Religious perform spiritual works, and their bad example disturbs the other Sisters. They are like the ape spoken of by Lucian. Some children had dressed it up in their own clothes, and taught it to dance so well that many did not know at first that it was a monkey. But when one of the children began to dance with it, and accidentally allowed it to see some nuts, pausing in the dance it seized upon them, thus manifesting its true character. And so it is with the Religious of whom we have spoken. They wear the religious habit, say the Office in choir, follow the conventual exercises like the others, and are sometimes considered to be as virtuous as they. But because they do not possess the religious spirit, their hypocritical piety is soon discovered. They violate the Rule on every occasion, they are sensitive and disobedient, and, being actuated by worldly thoughts and sentiments, they find more consolation everywhere than in divine things. Can such Religious expect eternal life merely because they wear the habit of St. Augustine, St. Clare, or St. Teresa? In the pure love of God, in the true spiritual life, and in the practice of the

duties of her vocation, lies the essential character of a perfect nun. God is not blind. He can not be deceived. He will judge us according to our deeds. St. Lawrence Justinian says: "The eternal Judge will judge every one, not according to his outward honors and distinctions, but according to his works. He will examine Religious on their fidelity to the Rules of their Order, and according to that He will pass sentence."

Her name, her religious habit, the very walls of the cloister will cry to heaven for vengeance against that nun who has not lived in conformity with her vocation. Surely a sick man whose evil condition the best remedies and the most skilful physicians only aggravate would be pronounced incurable. Now, every Order approved by the Holy See may be likened to a pharmacy filled with spiritual remedies, not only for the cure of sick souls, but for the strengthening of healthy ones in the grace of God. Some of those spiritual remedies are: The frequent reception of the holy sacraments, the religious exercises, the innumerable opportunities for the practice of virtue, the watchful guidance of Superiors, the Rules and customs of the Order, and the good example of others. If, among all this abundance of remedies, a nun continues spiritually sick, gaining from the religious life nothing but the name and garb, she may rest assured that these will procure her only greater anguish and more severe punishment.

St. Augustine declared after his conversion that he never knew more virtuous souls than those that served God in religion with their whole heart; but, on the contrary, none worse than they who sinned in the religious life. The truth of his remark is clear. The greater the obligation and the oppor-

tunity to do good the graver the fault of omission.

What fear and confusion will seize the insincere and faithless Religious when Almighty God, at the moment of death, will call her to account for her reprehensible life!

CHAPTER III.

The Name "Religious."—Self-Renunciation.—Mortification.

THE name and title of Religious is given to one who is specially pledged to the practice of the virtue of religion. Religion, in the sense in which it is here used, may be regarded from two several points of view, that is to say, either in particular, as a virtue distinct from the other virtues, or in general, as a virtue comprising all other virtues.

Inasmuch as it is a particular virtue, it is thus defined by St. Thomas: Religion is an interior and supernatural habit of the soul which inclines us to render to God the worship due to Him. Regarded as a general virtue, it comprises the theological and at the same time the moral virtues. The teaching of the Angelic Doctor is expressed in these precise terms: "Religion is a profession of faith, hope, and charity, by means of which man is brought primarily into relationship with God; and it calls into exercise all the other virtues, such as mercy and temperance." According to these words of St. James: "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation, and to keep one's self unspotted from this world" (James i. 27).

Religion, understood in this latter sense, takes in the whole Christian life, either because it directs the intention of all moral virtue to God, its rightful end; or because the acts proper to religion, the worship of God in truth and verity, necessitate many fundamental virtues such as faith, hope, charity, humility,

etc. Hence, it results, as a natural consequence, that every Christian really worthy of the name, that is to say, one who conscientiously keeps the Commandments, and who, therefore, practices the Christian virtues in the degree required of him, may justly be called a Religious. He has, in all truth and justice, every right to this title. It seems, however, more natural to apply this appellation exclusively to those persons who aim at the attainment of Christian perfection. As St. Thomas wisely remarks: "If anything may be predicated of many persons, those individuals have the principal claims to it who possess it in the highest degree, or who practice it in its perfection."

This remark clearly demonstrates how rightly the name of Religious is given to those persons who are so happy as to have consecrated themselves to God in an Order or Congregation approved by the Church; it also explains why entering an Order or Congregation thus approved is termed "going into Religion." Thus we say of the member of an Order, he or she has been so many years in Religion, his or her name in Religion is this or that.

But if we keep to the strict sense of the word as denoting a special and distinct virtue, we shall find another reason, and a more weighty one, perhaps, for acknowledging that persons who are consecrated to God by vows may legitimately be entitled Religious.

Religion, as we have already said, is the virtue that induces us to pay to God the homage due to Him. Now there is one act which, as Father de Condren asserts, corresponds to all that God is; and that is the act of sacrifice. Therefore sacrifice is preeminently the act appertaining to the virtue of religion. "By sacrifice," says the illustrious General of the

Oratorians, "we acknowledge God as the Supreme Being. We acknowledge Him, in His essential and incomprehensible grandeur and perfection, as being in very truth above all adoration, all love." In this consists the sublimity, the perfection of the act of sacrifice; consequently it comprises in itself all the duty man owes to God. For this reason Our Lord, when He came among us to be Our Redeemer, our pattern, was above all and before all a living sacrifice before His heavenly Father—that is to say, a victim and an eternal holocaust to His glory.

Now, every soul consecrated to God is also, in union with Our Lord, a victim, a holocaust before God. "You are now," St. Francis de Sales said to a young nun, after her profession in the Visitation, "you are now laid upon the sacred altar to be consumed as a whole burnt-offering."

Consequently, in this state, and by the dispositions befitting this state, the soul consecrated to God by vows truly fulfils, in so far as in her lies, all the duties of the virtue of religion. Thus her rightful name, the title that best answers to her state and vocation, is the name, the title of Religious.

It may perchance strike the young novice that we are somewhat premature in dealing with a subject which in itself seems to imply a certain degree of perfection. In one sense, it is true, self-renunciation is peculiarly a characteristic of the perfect; it may almost be said that in one respect it actually is perfection. But this virtue, like every other, is only acquired by degrees, little by little, and it will be so with us. And since Our Lord said to all men—as St. Luke expressly states: *"Dicebat autem ad omnes,"* "He said to all"—"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself" (Luke ix. 23), thus specifying renunciation and self-denial as the first

condition of walking in His steps, it is only natural that we should treat of it in the commencement of the instructions we address to novices,* who have every right to be regarded as those happy disciples of Our Lord, who, having abandoned the world, walk *con amore* in the footsteps of their divine Master.

Here there are three things that must be attentively considered and thoroughly apprehended in order to form a correct idea of the virtue of self-renunciation. First of all, it is essential to know what is understood by this self, this ego, which has to be renounced; in the second place, to ascertain accurately what are the distinctive characteristics by which it makes its presence manifest within us; finally, to learn the way whereby to give it its death-blow, and that is by the practice of the virtue of self-denial.

Let the young novice, therefore, pay close attention to this subject; it is one of very great importance. It is utterly impossible to advance a single step in the spiritual life without the knowledge of what we are about to expound, without love for the means which we are about to point out for the acquisition of so indispensable a virtue. In fact, without self-renunciation what would be the meaning of that title of victim which we bear in virtue of our oblation? It would only be a great, a grievous mockery.

*Father Surin, writing to the Mistress of Novices, says: "They must be early accustomed to give up their own will, to die to their passions, to raise their hearts above creatures, and made to feel ashamed of all the instincts of nature. This renunciation will lead direct to charity, and render them obedient to the impulses of grace, for there is no shorter route whereby to arrive at the love of Our Lord than the mortification of all our natural propensities, our desires, our tastes, our pleasures."

1. What is the *self* which we are bound to renounce? The word self signifies a certain life within us which is, to some extent, a part of ourselves, and which we ought to exterminate. Let us explain this.

In every man and woman there are three several lives: the natural life, the supernatural life, the life of self. The natural life is the life of the senses, by which we come and go, we see the objects around us, etc.; it is also the life of the intellect, inasmuch as its faculties (such as the understanding, will, judgment, resolution, etc.) are employed in a wholly natural manner, apart from the supernatural succor of grace. It is called the natural life because it performs the acts proper to it by the natural means wherewith God has endowed us, *i. e.*, the organs of sense and the faculties of the mind. We possess this life when we are born into the world. It is needless to say that our natural life is not that which we are bound to destroy, for to do so would be to commit the grievous crime of suicide.

There is within us a second life as real and actual as the first, but the existence of which can not be verified by the testimony of the senses; it is the supernatural life, which we received at our baptism and which is also called sanctifying grace, or the life of Christ in our souls. Our Lord referred to this life when He said: "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly" (John x. 10). St. Paul speaks of it frequently to the faithful in his epistles; we can not attempt to quote the numerous passages. Of himself he says: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). This divine life, which St. Peter designates as "fellowship with God," is, therefore, really within us, if we have preserved our baptismal grace, or if,

having lost it by mortal sin, we have recovered it by the Sacrament of Penance. And as life of every kind makes its existence known by inward movements and outward acts, so the life of grace, the life of Jesus Christ within us, manifests itself by inward desires, an attraction for matters of faith, the maxims of the Gospel, Christian virtues, and outward supernatural acts in keeping with those inward inclinations.

Happy the souls who live by this holy and divine life in unbroken continuity! All their actions are meritorious and worthy of Him who died that we might have life, this supernatural life of which we speak. It would be absurd, nay impious, to say that this most excellent life is the one which must be destroyed in us. We do destroy it if we have the misfortune to commit mortal sin, and this is so stupendous a misfortune that no physical affliction that could befall us on earth is to be compared to it.

Finally, there is within us a third life, an evil life, the source and principle of bad inclinations and bad deeds. St. Paul alludes to this life when he congratulates the faithful on having extinguished it within them. "You are dead," he says—that is, dead to the life of sin—"and your life [the new life of grace] is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). And elsewhere he says: "For we that are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 2.) Again he speaks of it under different designations; he calls it the "law of our members," because being utterly corrupt this life seems to act principally through the instrumentality of the flesh; he calls it the "old man" because it exists within us previous to our baptism and has its germ in original sin. This is the reason why this baneful life is also

spoken of as the life of Adam, as the supernatural life is termed the life of Jesus Christ.

All this is unquestionably true. Baptism has set us free from original sin, but it has not taken from us the tendency to evil which is one consequence of original sin, and this proneness to evil is precisely what reveals the existence within us of this third life which struggles against the life of grace, ever striving to subdue and annihilate it, whereas it is itself that must be destroyed and extirpated, if possible, with the help of divine grace.

But why is this evil life, which we are bound to destroy, this life of sin (if it may be so called on account of the work it produces), this fatal life, why is it called the *life of self?*

The reason is this. Because just as the life of grace which was imparted to us in baptism leads us to make God our center and final end, so that all our actions are directed to His good pleasure and His glory, in like manner the life of sin, the life of the old man, the life of Adam, leads us to make ourselves our center and our end, and in all things to seek our own gratification and glory. But this will be more fully explained by what follows.

2. The general characteristics of the life of self which we ought to renounce.

These general characteristics are self-love, self-will, and attachment to one's own opinion. This means that the life of Adam within us makes its presence known by three propensities which it creates in us. It leads us to love ourselves, to desire nothing but what pleases us, and to cling obstinately to our own opinions and our own judgments.

The first destructive characteristic is self-love. Self-love induces us to conceive a high esteem of ourselves, to think all that we do is right, to desire

the good opinion of others, and do all we can to avoid lessening that good opinion; to give way to sadness and dejection when we encounter the humiliations inevitable in this life, etc. It also leads us to seek our own gratification in everything: in our thoughts, in giving free play to our imaginations, our recollections; in our occupations, our likes and dislikes, our relation to others, etc. It is self, always self, on which our thoughts are centered, and which we seek to satisfy and gratify.

The second characteristic is self-will. This inspires us with a habitual abhorrence of restraint, an inherent aversion to all authority. If we love our Superiors, we love them for what they are in themselves, their pleasing qualities, their virtues; we do not love the authority with which they are invested. If we like some particular Rule or the practice of some mortification, we do so—perhaps unconsciously to ourselves—because it is self-chosen; those that are imposed upon us are far more difficult to accept; sometimes we find them intolerable.

The third characteristic is attachment to one's own opinion. The intellect is the highest part of man, it may be said to be the citadel of self. It will stand out when all else surrenders. We submit our external actions to the government of others; we give up our will, but the mind retains its independence. This is the point which must be attacked by fire and sword, for if this fortress is carried, the victory will be complete, and divine grace will reign in us and dominate all its foes. This destruction, this death, will be our triumph, and we shall be enabled to say with St. Paul: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. i. 21).

3. How to effect this complete death of the ego, which is perfect self-abnegation.

It must be acknowledged that this is the work of a lifetime. Every one has heard what St. Francis de Sales said concerning self-love: "We ought to consider ourselves very fortunate if it dies a quarter of an hour before we do." Oh, what prolonged, what painful exertion is required to eventually compass this death! It is a long, an arduous task, and must, at the same time, be carried on without cessation or intermission. It is more easy than one would think to lose in a single moment all that has been gained in long months of earnest endeavor. Now, more than at any time, the Religious appears in the light of a victim continually dying, and in virtue of the generosity, the persistency of his self-immolation, enabled to say with St. Paul: "I die daily" (1 Cor. xv. 31).

Mortification is the usual means whereby we attain to the death of self. The word mortification is derived from the Latin *mors*, death, and, in the sense in which we employ it, mortification is synonymous with renunciation.

But the virtue of renunciation calls to her aid, in accomplishing this conquest, several other virtues, by means of which she attains the perfection peculiar to her, which answer to the general characteristics of this self which we pointed out, *viz.:* self-love, self-will, and attachment to one's own judgment. Thus humility is instrumental in destroying self-love, obedience effects the death of self-will, and simplicity that of attachment to our own judgment.

Cultivate these virtues, and then your life will be truly one of self-immolation and consequently most pleasing to your divine Spouse. We must die to self, and live again to God, in order that we may attain to true happiness.

In the eleventh instruction of Thomas à Kempis

to his novices, he takes as his text these words: Lord, "for Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter" (Ps. xliii. 22), and expounds them as follows:

"Pay great heed, my dear brethren, to the words you have just heard. Although they were uttered by the prophetic lips of the Psalmist long before you were born, they are none the less intended to afford you, at the present time, most salutary instruction.

"O my dear brethren, you who are in Religion, who live under the rule of obedience, if you fulfil your vows faithfully you are martyrs, or at any rate you may become martyrs through the sufferings of each day. As many times as you devote your powers to the performance of your daily work, so many times a fresh crown is allotted you as the reward of your labor. And if, stripped of all self-will, you offer staunch resistance to your sensual inclinations, God will give you abundant consolation.

"A Religious living under obedience, resolved to break his own will, endeavoring to execute the will of his Superior in all humility, will become, in a spiritual sense, a real martyr, although he is not called upon to bare his neck to the executioner's blade. And he who every day of his life seeks to be perfectly mortified, practicing obedience with simplicity of heart, imitates the example of Abraham, who raised no objection when commanded to bind his only son Isaac, to slay him and offer him as a burnt-offering.

"We read of the holy martyrs that it was through various kinds of tortures that they reached the kingdom of heaven. The option as to the sort of death or torture they were to suffer was not even left to them, yet with perfect resignation to the decrees of divine Providence they offered themselves body and

soul to their Creator, ready to endure any and every kind of torment. Thus, when any one of you receives from his Superior's lips a command diametrically opposed to his own will, and nevertheless prepares to obey that command implicitly, from the moment when he forces himself to do violence to himself, and suppresses, stifles the murmur that rises to his lips, he sacrifices to God, upon the altar of his own heart, a victim which is well pleasing to Him. Conquering himself, he gains a triumphant victory over the enemy after the same manner as did the martyrs.

"You have often read in the Acts of those glorious confessors an account of the bodily torments inflicted on them. They yielded their members to the most cruel tortures. And it behooves you likewise to chastise your body by fasting, vigils, silence, and manual labor.

"When any one has got so far as to regard as sweet what is bitter, to accept contumely as honor, to bear affliction as something pleasurable, then indeed does one truly share with the martyrs Our Lord's chalice; then need one no longer dread the scathing flames of a future life; then may one entertain the hope, the firm and blissful hope, of being one day admitted to the company of the saints.

"It was by meditating upon the everlasting pains of hell that the martyrs obtained courage to bear the keenest torture as if it were a thing of little moment, and made choice of the strait and narrow gate through which to pass into the boundless realms of the kingdom of heaven. (And this is what fervent Religious do who are really worthy of the name they bear.)

"Each one, in his own Order, may gain the martyr's palm by a devout and pious life. He will suc-

ceed in doing so if he generously resists his evil propensities, prays for his enemies, displays sufficient constancy to preserve inviolate the fair flower of chastity; if, following Our Lord's example, he is obedient even unto death; if in everything he seeks the good pleasure of God and sacrifices his own will; if, finally, he desires always to have less rather than more of the good things of the world, and that which is needful for the support of this present life.

"In fact, holy poverty, voluntary poverty, is looked upon in the light of a martyrdom. To the poor in spirit, even as to the martyr, the kingdom of heaven is promised, is given by Our Lord.

"In like manner, when silence is imposed upon a tongue that loves to speak, when one forbids it to address a word either to one of one's fellow-Religious or to externes, it is equivalent to binding it tightly with a cord, a species of torture which many a martyr had to endure.

"And when a subject who is fond of walking, and likes to go hither and thither, is forbidden to leave the monastery, when he is even told to remain quietly in his cell, it is the same as if, with holy violence, his feet were made fast in the stocks, another torture inflicted on the martyrs.

"When a Religious who is prone to curiosity closes his eyes that he may not behold the vain things of time and sense, he will receive the same recompense as the saints whose eyes were torn out by order of the cruel tyrants. And when one who has a tendency to indolence and loves to be at rest is made to work hard, if he obeys the orders given him in a docile spirit, he will receive the reward given to the holy martyrs, whose wrists were laden with chains and their limbs stretched upon the rack.

"A virtuous and obedient brother ought therefore

to consider that his bodily powers are no longer his own to dispose of as he lists; they are in the power of the Superior, to whom he has voluntarily subjected himself for the love of God, promising to conform in everything, even in his every undertaking, his every act, to whatever his Superior may ordain for the good of his soul. By thus doing he will rank with the martyrs, he will receive the palm his patience has merited, and the crown of eternal life through the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen."

Thus the devout à Kempis exhorts his novices. So excellent an instruction might well be enough for us; but we can not forego the advantage of hearing what St. Francis de Sales says on this subject. The nuns who formed the first community of the Visitation have handed down to us in writing the following words from the lips of their holy founder:

"My desire for you, my dear daughters, is that you should be mortified; that you should live day and night in the spirit of interior sacrifice and complete abandonment to the will of God, which will serve you in the stead of disciplines, fasts, and hair-shirts.

"The martyrs drank the sacred chalice of the Passion at one draught; some in a single hour, others in two or three days, others again in the course of a month. As for ourselves, we may be martyrs and drink that chalice, not indeed in two or three days, but throughout the whole course of our life, by continually mortifying ourselves as all monks and nuns do, as it behooves those to do whom God has called to enter Religion with the intention of bearing His cross, of being crucified with Him. Is not this, in very deed, the greatest of martyrdoms—never to do one's own will, constantly to submit one's own judg-

ment to that of others, to flay one's heart, to empty it of all manner of impure affections, of all that is not God; to live, not in accordance with one's own fancies and inclinations, but in accordance with reason, in accordance with the divine will? That is a martyrdom which is all the more meritorious because it is a slow, a lifelong martyrdom. But if we persevere, and are faithful to our vocation, when it is ended we shall obtain a glorious crown after having crucified ourselves with Our Lord by the unflinching suppression of all within us which might be displeasing in His sight; and in order to stimulate us to this, to encourage us in it, He vouchsafes to prove to us that He died for love of us. While still hanging on the cross, He permitted a soldier to wound His side with a spear, and pierce His Sacred Heart, so that it might be seen that He was really dead, and that He died of love, the love of His Sacred Heart for man."

Such are St. Francis' words. We do not know of any other founder of an Order who laid so much stress on the necessity of life as a victim in the religious state as did the saintly founder of the Visitation. His spiritual daughters know this; and they do not forget that the subject which he proposed in the Book of Customs for their meditation on the eve of their profession is this: "The Flaying Alive of the Victim." What rigor this displays, united to what incomparable gentleness!*

*From *The Spirit of Sacrifice.*

The Terms Religion, Religious, the Convent, Laura, Ascetae, Monk, Nun, Religious Orders.

RELIGION—RELIGIOUS.

THE word "religion" is often used in a technical sense by Catholic writers, to denote the virtue which deals with giving to God the honor which is His due. St. Thomas looks upon it as a part of the virtue of justice. God is the supreme Lord of all; all other beings are entirely dependent upon Him. Man, by his reason, can know this dignity of God and his own dependence upon God. He is therefore bound to acknowledge this dignity and dependence; to adore, praise, and thank his Creator, and to ask Him for all that he stands in need of. These acts of homage are paid chiefly by prayer and sacrifice.

Religion is sometimes used in a still narrower sense to designate the state of those who have entirely devoted themselves to God by the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Hence the various Religious Orders are styled "Religious." Trench* infers from this use of the word that monks and nuns are the only "religious" people among Catholics. St. Thomas long ago met this objection in a way that should commend itself to a writer on language. "A name common to many things is sometimes appropriated to that one to which it eminently belongs; as, for example, Rome is often called 'the city.' Now, religion is the virtue by which a man does something for the service and worship of God. And, therefore, they are said, by antonomasia, to be Religious who have devoted themselves entirely to the service of God, offering, as it were, a holocaust to Him."

**Study of Words*, p. 9.

THE CONVENT—"LAURAS."

The hermitages and "lauras" of the first ages gradually gave place to the cenobite mode of life; only in the Orders of Chartreuse and Camaldoli has the solitary life been partially retained to this day. Monachism was firmly planted in Western Europe by St. Benedict of Aniane in the ninth century, and from that time the name *conventus*—applied alike to communities of men and women living under a Rule and practicing the evangelical counsels—came into common use.

Different Orders preferred different sites for their convents. The Culdees of Iona chose islands or lonely spots, removed from the beaten tracks of trade and travel; this pious instinct is attested by the position of Iona, Lindisfarne, and old Melrose. The Benedictines were said to prefer hillsides; the Cistercians chose quiet valleys; the mendicant Orders, who depended on alms, and made preaching one of the great aims of their institution, repaired to the cities and towns. The Society of Jesus, as a rule, is found in cities:

> Bernardus valles, montes Benedictus amabat,
> Oppida Franciscus, magnas Ignatius urbes.

The parts of a convent are: 1, The church; 2, The choir, *viz.*, that portion of the church in which the members say the daily Office; 3, The chapter-house, a place of meeting in which the Rule is read, elections made, and community business discussed; 4, The cells; 5, The refectory (in old English, *fraitour*, or *frater*); 6, The dormitory; 7, The infirmary; 8, The parlor, for the reception of visitors; 9, The library; 10, The treasury; 11, The cloister; 12, The crypt.

The legislation on convents forms a large and im-

portant section of canon law. Among the chief regulations is the law of enclosure, which "separates the convent from the world by the prohibition or restriction of intercourse from without."

The "laura" (Greek λαυρα), properly an alley or lane, was an aggregation of separate cells, tenanted by monks, "under the not very strongly defined control of a Superior." * Usually each monk had a cell to himself, but in the "laura" of Pachomius one cell was assigned to three monks. For five days in the week the tenants of the "laura" remained in their cells, living on bread and water, and working at basket-making, or some similar employment; on the Saturday and Sunday they took their meals together in the common refectory, and worshiped God in the common church. The discipline of the "laura" was a kind of intermediate stage between the eremitical life of St. Antony and the monasticism founded by St. Basil and St. Benedict. It flourished in the fourth and fifth centuries in the desert country near the Jordan; St. Euthymius, St. Sabbas, and the abbot Gerasimus were its chief types and promoters. St. Euthymius lived to be ninety-six years old; just before he died he told the person whom the monks had designated as his successor that it was the will of God that the "laura" should be turned into a monastery, as if foreseeing that this was the discipline of the future for the more perfect souls.†

THE ASCETÆ.

In regard to the "ascetæ" (Greek ἀσκέω, ἀσκητής) it was the belief that through bodily

*Dictionary of Christian Antiq.

†Fleury, livr. xxviii., xxix., xxx.; Smith and Cheetham.

"exercise," and a strict discipline imposed on the senses, it was in the power of man to perfect his moral nature and rise to spiritual heights not otherwise attainable. This belief had been common both among the Jews and pagans for some time before the coming of Christ. Philo's account of the Essenes is well known—a Jewish sect of mystical and ascetic tenets, much diffused in Palestine in the first century before Christ, with its initiations, grades, and secrets, living in villages because of the luxury and immorality of the towns, renouncing marriage, and following rules of strict temperance in regard to food, sleep, and whatever else nature craves. The Therapeutæ in Egypt were a similar sect. Their name and that of the Essenes is said to have the same meaning, signifying *healing,* for they believed that their discipline healed the *concretam labem* of the soul's impurity.

In the pagan world similar doctrines were widely held by the Stoics. Both among them and the Essenes the doctrine of the two principles, the persuasion that matter was essentially evil, and that he was most perfect who was freest from the blasting touch of animal existence, colored largely both their theories and their practices. The Christian ascetes could not so deem of that fleshly nature of which Christ, their divine Lord, had deigned to be a partaker: to master the lower nature was their aim, not to eradicate it; desire and fear, joy and grief, they did not regard as in themselves evil, but as to be brought by discipline into a strict subordination to the true end of man, which is to know and love God, and to do His will. The means which they employed were voluntary chastity, fasting, perseverance in prayer, voluntary poverty, and macera-

tion of the flesh. In the Apostolical Constitutions* the "ascetæ" are mentioned as an intermediate order of Christians between the clergy and the laity. As a general rule, they did not go out of the world, like anchorites and monks, but strove to live a perfect life in the world. Abuses after a time appeared, particularly in regard to the *γυναῖκες συνεισακτοι*, women who lived under the same roof with ascetes for the benefit of their instructions and example.

Modern life, especially when permeated with Baconian ideas respecting the true task of man in the world, is pointedly unascetic. If we turn over a series of pictures of eminent modern men, there is one common feature which we can not fail to notice, whether the subject of the picture be artist, literary man, or man of action, and whatever intelligence, power, or benevolence may breathe from the face—namely, the absence of an expression of self-mastery.

MONK AND NUN.

The ascetics of the first Christian age have been described ("ascetæ"). They did not, as a rule, separate themselves from men, but practiced a rigid mortification in the world, and aimed at fulfilling the counsels of perfection. Monachism commenced in Egypt. In the middle of the third century the persecution of Decius caused many fervent Christians to leave the cities and flee into the deserts, there to find that freedom in the divine service which human laws denied them. For a long time they lived apart, each in his own cell, supporting themselves by daily labor. Thus the term *monk* (Anglo-Saxon *munuc*, through the Latin *monachus*, Greek *μοναχός*, "solitary"). The anchorites or hermits were those

*Kraus, p. 96.

who specially desired solitude; of these St. Paul was the founder. St. Antony, whose life embraces more than a hundred years (250-356), chose for a time absolute solitude, but in his later years he allowed a number of disciples to gather round him, who, though living each apart, were eager to profit by the depth and wisdom of his advice, and ready to practice whatever rules he might impose. Thus St. Antony was the founder of monachism, although the cenobitic life, which has been a characteristic of nearly all the monks of later times, had not yet appeared. Of this, St. Pachomius is regarded as the originator, who, about A.D. 315, built monasteries in the Thebaid. It is easy to conceive how the common life should appear, under given conditions, more suitable as a road to perfection than the separate life. How one might pass into the other may be seen from a passage in the "Orations" of St. Gregory Nazianzen.* Speaking of St. Athanasius taking refuge with the contemplatives of Egypt, who, "withdrawing themselves from the world, and embracing the wilderness, live to God," he says that, of these, "some, practicing a life absolutely solitary and unsocial, converse with themselves and God alone, knowing no more of the world than they can become acquainted with in the deserts; others, loving the law of charity by way of intercourse, at once men of solitude and men of society, while dead to all other men and to worldly affairs in general . . . are a world to one another, and by comparison and contact sharpen one another's virtue." Hilarion, a disciple of St. Antony, is said to have been the first to introduce communities of monks in Palestine; Eustathius of Sebaste, in Armenia; St. Basil, in Cappadocia. St. Athanasius, by making known at

*Or. 21.

Rome the story of the wonderful life of St. Antony, is said to have caused a great movement toward monasticism. In the time of St. Jerome the city had many monasteries both of monks and nuns. St. Martin was a strenuous upholder of the cenobitic life; two celebrated French monasteries, Marmoutier, near Tours, and Ligugé, near Poitiers, were of his foundation. The Rule of St. Augustine was perhaps rather designed for regular clerks than for monks, who for a long time after their institution were all laymen. At first it was nearly true that every monastery followed its own Rule; gradually, however, the Rule of St. Basil (Basilians) obtained a preference, and, after its translation into Latin by Rufinus of Aquileia, was largely adopted in the West. Monachism languished in Italy in the fifth century, owing to the irruptions of the barbarians; in the sixth (529) the strong but gentle hand of St. Benedict of Nursia raised it to a pedestal from which it has never since been dethroned (Benedictines). The Benedictine Rule gradually swallowed up all the others, being found more suitable than any to the conditions of life in Western Europe. For several centuries no other Rule was heard of. In the tenth and eleventh centuries the Orders of Cluny, Camaldoli, the Chartreuse, and Citeaux, branched off from the parent stem. In the thirteenth century appeared the friars, Franciscans, Dominicans; in the sixteenth, the Jesuits, Theatines, and other regular clerks; followed down to our own day by the various congregations of both sexes, the members of which, under their several institutes, devote themselves to the glory of God and the good of their neighbor.

A nun (Latin *nonna*) is a maid or widow who has consecrated herself to God by the three vows of

poverty, chastity, and obedience, and bound herself to live in a convent under a certain Rule. From the fifth century *nonnus* and *nonna* occur pretty frequently in relation to monks and nuns, a sense of quasi-filial respect being attached to the words. Compare the Greek *vávva,* aunt, and the Italian *nonno* and *nonna,* grandfather and grandmother.

It may be stated as a general fact, applicable to nearly all the great Orders of men, that, soon after the foundation of each, an Order of women, subject to or in connection with it, was established, in which the Rule and statutes of the founder were, so far as the difference of sex permitted, punctually observed. Even the Society of Jesus is not an exception, for although the founder obtained a prohibition from the Pope against the company's undertaking the direction of nuns, the "Dames Anglaises," and several more recent institutes, though not otherwise connected with the Society, follow the Rule of St. Ignatius.

If we consider the four principal monastic Rules separately, we find that:

a. The Rule of St. Basil (Basilians) was the basis of that framed by Albert, patriarch of Jerusalem, for the Order of Mount Carmel (Carmelites), and adopted in its original rigor by St. Teresa for the Order of Discalced Carmelites which she founded in 1562.

b. The Rule of St. Augustine is followed by communities of nuns annexed to every Congregation of Augustine canons and hermits; also by Dominican nuns and the Ursulines. All, or nearly all, the communities of women founded since the Council of Trent follow the Rule of St. Augustine but have in addition a body of constitutions or customs suited to their special end and spirit,

and, in some cases, taken from the Rule of St. Ignatius.

c. The Rule of St. Benedict is followed by the nuns of Camaldoli, Vallombrosa, and Fontevrault.*

d. The Rule of St. Francis of Assisi is embraced by the Order of nuns called Poor Clares, founded by St. Clare; this is the second order of St. Francis.

The nuns of St. Jerome follow a Rule found in the works of that doctor; the nuns of the Visitation (1610), one given them by St. Francis de Sales; it is the Rule of St. Augustine with a number of slight modifications.

RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

The conception of Orders of monks did not arise so long as every monastery was an independent entity, managing its own affairs without reference to any other authority but the general law of the Church. Beda speaks of monasteries following the Rule of St. Benedict, but he never speaks of the Order of St. Benedict. It was only when, commencing in the tenth century, separate communities, such as those of Cluny, Citeaux, and the Chartreuse, were formed within the great Benedictine brotherhood, and these communities, however widely scattered, submitted to the rule of a single superior (usually the abbot of the mother house), and met periodically in order to settle their common affairs, that the term "Order" came into use. A completely new Order—the Trinitarians—was founded by St. John of Matha toward the close of the twelfth century for the redemption of Christians held in captivity by the infidels. The institution of Our Lady of Mercy, founded (1218) by St. Peter Nolasco as an order of chivalry, but afterward transformed into

*See Helyot.

a religious order, had the same end in view. Early in the thirteenth century the mendicant Orders—Franciscan, Dominican, and Carmelite friars—were either founded or came into distinct prominence; in the second half of the century they were joined by the Augustinian friars. These four Orders, having no landed property, but subsisting on alms, preached in all parts of Europe—but especially in cities, where luxury and civic pride were beginning to show themselves—the humbling and fortifying doctrines of the cross. The Servites, founded by seven merchants of Florence and propagated by St. Philip Beniti, after a struggling existence of more than two centuries, were recognized by Innocent VIII. (1487) as a fifth mendicant Order, with privileges in all respects equal to those of the other four. The Jeronymites and Brigittines were founded in the fourteenth century. The founder of the Minims (1473), a filiation of the Order of St. Francis, was St. Francis of Paula.

The movement of the Reformation, of which the mainspring was the rebellion of man's lower, against the restraints imposed upon it by his higher, nature, was met on the Catholic side partly by direct antagonism, partly by argument, and partly by the reassertion, under new forms adapted to the altered circumstances of the time, of the unchanging Christian ideal of the moral and religious end of man. And since the spirit of the Church is most clearly seen in the Religious Orders, it was to be expected that the conflict with Protestantism would fall to a large extent into the hands of men bound by the three vows. The Society of Jesus (1540) opposed to the indiscipline and license of Protestantism a more rigid and unquestioning obedience to authority than had yet been known in the Church. The Theatines

(1524), Capuchins (1528), and Barnabites (1533) were founded in order to wage war against the corruption of morals which prevailed, and to promote the religious education of the people. The Discalced Carmelites, men and women (1580, 1563), practiced the full austerities prescribed by the original Rule. In the following century an austere reform of the Cistercian Order was established in the monastery of La Trappe (Trappists) by Dom Armand de Rancy (1662).

In the Middle Ages, when the power of law was still weak, and society was often agitated by unpunished acts of turbulence and injustice, the sight of the peaceful and orderly life of a monastery, spent in a round of ceaseless prayer, praise, and study, was by very contrast deeply refreshing and stimulative to the higher characters among the laity. But when in process of time the "reign of law" was firmly established, this contrast lost much of its sharpness and, so far as immunity from illegal violence was concerned, ceased to exist. It was therefore fitting that religious society, in order to maintain its ground in advance of civil, and not only "allure to brighter worlds," but also "lead the way," should produce new manifestations of the old endeavor after perfection. Coming forth from the cloister into the world, but still not of the world, the religious life has sanctified and embraced all those varied activities which have the relief of human suffering, and the dispelling of that ignorance which is an obstacle to salvation, as their end. Hence has arisen the multitude of Congregations which adorn the Catholic Church of our own day.*

*From *The Catholic Dictionary.*

CHAPTER IV.

The Grace of Vocation to the Religious State.

RELIGIOUS may praise the Lord in the words of the Israelites when, freed from the tyranny of Pharao, they departed from Egypt: "In Thy mercy Thou hast been a leader to the people which Thou hast redeemed: and in Thy strength Thou hast carried them to Thy holy habitation" (Exod. xv. 13). As the Jews in the Old Law were the beloved people of God, and thus distinguished from the Egyptians, so in the New Law Religious are distinguished from people of the world. As the Jews were led out of Egypt, a land of discord and slavery, in which God was not known, so have Religious abandoned the world in which God is so little known, and which rewards its servants with sorrow and misery. As the Jews were led by a pillar of fire into the Promised Land, so Religious are guided by the light of the Holy Ghost into that blessed state, which is a foretaste of the heavenly country.

The supereminent advantages of the religious state are well set forth by St. Bernard when he exclaims: "Is it not in the holy religious state that one lives more purely, falls less frequently, rises more easily, walks more securely, is more plentifully endowed with grace, dies more confidently, is purified more quickly, and is rewarded more richly?"

That the Religious may clearly understand her obligation to thank God for the grace of her vocation, we shall enumerate some of the benefits attached to it. Of the verse: "When he came out of the land of Egypt, he heard a tongue which he knew not. He removed his back from the burdens"

(Ps. lxxx. 6), St. Jerome says: "The great grace signified is that which the Lord gave to the Religious whom He freed from Egypt, that is, from the world." St. Augustine refers to the sacrifice of Abraham as a symbol of the complete self-immolation to which Religious are called in the service of God and in the imitation of Christ. Abraham's oblation consisted of a cow, a she-goat, a ram, a turtle-dove, and a pigeon. The four-footed animals, beasts chained to the earth and typifying the sensual and the worldly, he divided and cut into many pieces. "But the birds he divided not" (Gen. xv. 10), but offered them whole in sacrifice. By the turtle-doves, those gentle and harmless creatures, are signified spiritual men, Religious, who love solitude and live apart from intercourse with others. By the pigeons also are symbolized those who strive after perfection, although they pursue piety in the midst of men and of worldly occupations. The doves that are sacrificed to the Lord are not divided. Religious dedicate themselves whole and entire to the service of God. To this they are called by divine grace. They make an absolute sacrifice of themselves to God. They are pure holocausts. They have only to aim, day by day, at following the Lord more closely.

"Behold, now, bless ye the Lord, all the servants of the Lord, who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God" (Ps. cxxxiii. 1). In relation to these words St. Jerome says that a worldly master has many who serve him, though in very different ways. Some are always around him in the house, others are occupied outdoors. So the Lord our God has different servants. Some stay in His house before His eyes and serve Him, but others are outside in the busy world. Religious are

they who are always in the house of the Lord. They stand before His face and may converse with Him quite freely. They are God's domestics; they who live in the world are His field-servants.

The Lord bestows an exceedingly great grace in taking a soul from the world, and placing her in religious solitude. But very blind are they who imagine that everything is done when they leave the world and enter Religion. They have, indeed, received a magnificent grace from God, for which they are bound to be ever grateful; but that is only the beginning of a long chain of graces with which they must cooperate by serving Him with love and ardor. They have not chosen God; He has chosen them without any merit of theirs, yes, in spite of their actual demerits.

A true Religious must give herself entirely to God, strive after solid virtue and perfection, and never consider herself safe from the attacks of the evil one.

CHAPTER V.

Means of Salvation in the Religious State.

THAT the Religious may better understand the great grace of vocation, we shall touch upon the manifold advantages by which she may easily and quickly reach the highest perfection.

Among the means of salvation afforded by the religious life may be mentioned first of all its sweet solitude, its silence and retirement; then the holiness of its occupations, its written Rules, its sacred customs, its poverty, chastity, and obedience, the good example, which stimulates emulation, the pious practices, the nameless graces that flow from these, the numerous spiritual exhortations and instructions, the zeal of Superiors which spurs all on—in one word, everything in the cloister tends to forward the salvation and perfection of all those sheltered within its sacred precincts.

First, consider the silence and solitude of the cloister. Not in the throngs of men, not in the turmoil of the world, will God treat with His chosen souls, open their spiritual eyes, fill them with heavenly light, and gladden them with His special favors. No, God chooses solitude for this. "I will lead her into solitude, and I will speak to her heart" (Osee ii. 14), says the Lord. The solitude for which Almighty God has special preference is that of the cloister, the gate of salvation. Here reigns unbroken peace. Here the angry waves of earthly cares are never heard. Here is the school of holy instruction, in which the Lord Himself is the Teacher. Here in silence and retirement He builds

up and strengthens His beloved ones. The cloister is the chosen place into which God gathers His souls of predilection in order to unite Himself to them most tenderly. It is a lovely paradise, like to that of our first parents. It is even superior to it, because in that an innocent man became sinful, whereas the cloister makes the sinful innocent and holy. It is the center, the element of holy souls. There they taste heavenly delights, and commune with their God in peace and love.

The second means of salvation in the religious state consists in the holiness of its occupations. From a religious community all low and worldly pursuits are banished. All self-seeking, all terrestrial gains are subordinated to the goods of eternity and charity. Here a man is, indeed, engrossed in labor and prayer, but his thoughts and aims are far from those of the children of the world, whose energies are directed and expended in the anxious quest of honor, wealth, and pleasure. Traffic is unknown here. There is no disquietude about outside affairs and social demands. No vexing family cares, no anxious thoughts in regard to one's support and one's environment are engendered in the cloister. In short, all is holy, all tends to the majesty of the Lord who is served therein. The soul abandons itself to His dominion, meditates on His adorable grandeur and power, sings His praises, thanks Him for His benefits, averts the divine anger from sinners, casts itself without care into His arms and on His Heart, and hopes, in His mercy, to be eternally united to Him. The cloister reproduces the life of the saints in heaven. The cloister is the paradise of earth.

The third means of salvation in the religious life lies in the established Rules of the Order. By the

Rules of an Order one aims at two things, namely, the choosing of good and the rejection of evil. Man, constantly influenced by his passions, easily forgets duties irksome to depraved nature. It is, therefore, most necessary for him to be reminded of them, spurred on, and encouraged to their fulfilment.

This is done by the conventual Rules, kept in full vigor by the watchfulness of Superiors. There is not one of them that does not continually place some duty before the eyes of the Religious. The holy Fathers compare the Rules to the wings of birds and to the wheels of a chariot. The wings, they say, are no burden, no hindrance to the bird; on the contrary, they help it to rise in the air and fly. Neither do wheels retard the chariot by their weight. They serve to set it in motion and to keep it moving. They lighten and facilitate the labor of the horses harnessed to it. Without wheels, they would not be able to draw one-half the weight, but with them their work becomes play. So is it with the Rules. Far from being a burden or a hindrance to Religious, they are wings by which they rise to heaven; they are the wheels which help them to carry the yoke of the Lord with admirable facility, that sweet yoke which worldlings drag with sighs and groans.

The religious Rules are, moreover, a powerful protection against sin. The Rule guards the Religious in all his ways, watches over the gates of the senses, moderates the desires, restrains excesses, bars the avenues to evil suggestions, and protects the soul from the attacks of the demon. The holy Fathers compare the Rule to a fortification. A city, they say, is in the best state of defence when outer fortifications correspond with inner means of security. By them the enemy will be kept off and his power

nullified. So, too, Religious are protected by their holy Rules. By them they are able to resist the attacks of the devil, because they accord with the Commandments of God and those of the Church. The power of the evil one is weakened by the Rules, for they disrupt the union which exists between him and the passions.

The fourth means of salvation in the religious life is contained in poverty, chastity, obedience, mortification, and self-denial. Riches are the greatest hindrance to salvation. The rich man is occupied with self and engrossed in selfish pursuits. Forgetful of heaven and eternity, he shuns neither trouble nor labor to increase his riches. His heart is divided between God and creatures, and most often do the latter entirely possess it. The Saviour Himself has declared with what difficulty a rich man enters the kingdom of heaven. Poverty of spirit confines the wants and the desires of man to the most necessary things, subjugates concupiscence, moderates the yearning after perishable goods, makes it easy for the heart to adhere to God exclusively, and to hope in Him for assistance in every trial.

Chastity frees the soul from the servitude of the senses, leads to its undivided sacrifice to God, and renders its flight to Him swift and delightful. Obedience binds irrevocably to God, and makes man an inexpressibly pleasing holocaust to heaven. Lastly, mortification masters concupiscence and creates man, so to say, to a new life full of holiness and perfection.

The fifth means is found in the good example afforded by the religious life. There are in the cloister none of those scandals which in the world insinuate their secret poison into the soul through the eyes and the ears, and deposit therein the germ of

death. No, in the peaceful seclusion of the cloister, the eyes and the ears may open fearlessly. They rest only on the most beautiful examples of virtue, they hear only what is elevating, peaceful, and holy. As there is nothing more injurious than scandal, so there is nothing more beneficial than good example. How many thousands among the first Christians were converted from their worship of idols by the example of the saints! Did not Jesus Christ and His apostles, by their example, produce an impression that prepared the way for their preaching? The cloister is full of examples that lead to sanctity.

The sixth means may be summed up in the holy practices and pious exercises of the convent. How many such exercises and customs form the daily routine of the religious life! Pious meditations in which, absorbed in the eternal truths, and nestling in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Religious lovingly evokes the holiest affections and the most generous resolutions. Therein the soul is enlightened by heavenly inspirations, strengthened by the grace of God and inflamed with His love. Walking with God in this earthly paradise, and conversing almost uninterruptedly with Him, places her duties before her in their full extent, helps her faithfully to fulfil them, and animates her to unflagging progress. Her heartfelt repentance washes away her faults, and prepares her for new and richer graces. By frequent confession she is purified from sin, receives wise instruction, prudent direction in the way of perfection, and new courage to struggle against the enemy of her soul. In the almost daily holy communion she is intimately united with her divine Bridegroom, strengthened against her own weakness, urged on to greater fervor and sanctity, inundated with sweetest consolation. and blessed with

the pledge of immortality. In the holy sacrifice of the Mass she takes part in the work of Redemption there daily renewed. Lastly, by means of daily spiritual reading, her mind is provided with wholesome lessons in piety and asceticism, while her heart is inflamed with charity by the sublime examples of sanctity that are held up to her as models, so that she may easily and securely reach perfection.

If we add to the foregoing the counsels of enlightened directors and the wise admonitions of Superiors, we must conclude that the religious state offers, in abundance, all means necessary for perfection.

CHAPTER VI.

Advantages of the Religious State.

God abundantly dispenses His richest graces to the Religious. Obstacles to her sanctification are thereby easily removed, and she is endued with special strength and joy to persevere in her efforts after virtue and perfection. If all this were fully comprehended, religious obedience would not appear so difficult, and greater numbers would abandon the world in the desire of possessing the precious advantages of the cloister. Yes, those rich graces which God pours upon the Religious not only extract all bitterness from her life, but impart to it singular sweetness.

Divine Providence never ceases to supply man with the grace and strength to fulfil the duties of his vocation. Here we find an essential difference between God and worldly rulers. While the latter grant their favorites offices and employments without regard to their requirements and qualifications for them, yea, sometimes even despite their known unworthiness, Almighty God is ever mindful of bestowing the necessary graces for the state and work to which He has called a soul. When the Lord called Peter and Andrew from their fishing-nets to the priestly office of the apostolate, He said to them: "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men" (Matt. iv. 19), which means: I will give you the grace necessary for your calling. In like manner did God act toward Moses when He sent him to Pharao to demand permission to lead the chosen people out of Egypt. Moses hesitated to

discharge the commission, and said: "Who am I that I should go to Pharao, and should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? They will not believe me when I say: The Lord has appeared to me." "I will be with thee," answered the Lord. Moses again objected: "Lord, I am not eloquent, and I have a slow tongue." But the Lord replied: "Behold I have appointed thee the God of Pharao" (Exod. vii. 1). Moses' power over Pharao was such as God Himself possessed. Grace is always proportioned to the importance and sublimity of the duties imposed.

What sight more sublime than that of a soul, called by Almighty God, turning her back on the world and seeking the cloister, there to serve the Lord forever in the spirit of self-sacrifice? Such a sight merits greater admiration and commendation than that of a general leading armies to the assault and conquest of strong cities. Great indeed is the victory of those who enter Religion. In both body and soul do the wonderful effects of divine grace appear. In Egypt the first-born were slain. In the soul of the Religious are slain, by the sword of mortification and obedience, all the first-born, namely, self-will, self-love, and all other inordinate inclinations. In the sea of self-sacrificing pursuits and penitential works are buried love of parents and relatives and the longing after the honors and pleasures of the world. In respect to the body, it is well-known that many who, while in the world, suffered almost constantly from physical ailments, were, on their retreat into the cloister, freed from all sickness. They who once were satisfied with none but choice and dainty dishes, now wish nothing better than the poor and simple food of the convent. Such are the effects of the grace which the

Lord bountifully bestows on Religious. To it alone must be ascribed the change that the soul experiences on leaving the world to enter the cloister.

We have called the cloister an earthly paradise, and St. Augustine agrees with us in his explanation of the following passage of Holy Scripture: "And the Lord God took man, and put him into the paradise of pleasure, to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. ii. 15). What does the Holy Scripture mean by these words? asks the saint. And he answers that God placed man in paradise to fulfil the commands which the Lord Himself had given him. By such obedience he would have retained the possession of that lovely abode, instead of losing it. Applying this to the religious life, ask yourself: Why has Almighty God put you in this paradise? That you should fulfil His commands and the evangelical counsels which the Rule makes a law for you. By your fidelity you are to guard and keep this paradise, which many have lost through folly and negligence. When a soul devotes herself to the spiritual state, we may justly say that she is born anew. She begins a better life when she forsakes the world to serve God. Therefore the Fathers call the taking of the vows a new birth, a spiritual regeneration, by which Almighty God gives to the soul His powerful grace, as He gave Eve to Adam for his helpmate in paradise. To this grace the soul must unreservedly deliver herself, determined to correspond to the designs of divine Providence in her.

Another reason why God lavishes His priceless graces on Religious is found in the words of Jesus to His disciples: "Where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). All religious communities are gathered together in the name of

the Lord, because their manner of life comes from God and is approved by the Holy See; confirmed by the bond of mutual love, with the service of God alone for end and aim. In the midst of such souls, God is found with His special graces. If Jesus has promised His presence to two or three gathered together in His name, what will He do where so many in community life have, as it were, but one heart and one soul? Truly, Religious are favored plants set in a fruitful soil upon which the heavenly dew is constantly falling.

The innumerable graces of the religious life afford, as the saints say, a foretaste of heaven. Father Charles of Lothringen, a holy Jesuit of royal birth, used to say that one moment of the God-given peace which he tasted in his cell richly repaid him for all that he had left in the world. The joy that inundated his soul in that little cell was at times so great that he was forced to leap in the exuberance of his joy. The Blessed Seraphine of Ascol, a Capuchin, declared that he would not exchange one inch of his hempen girdle for all the kingdoms of the world. When Arnulph, the Cistercian, compared the riches and honors of the court which he had forsaken with the consolation tasted in the cloister, he used to cry out: "It is true, my Jesus! Thou dost surely give the hundredfold which Thou dost promise to those that forsake all for Thee."

CHAPTER VII.

The Religious Truly a Bride of Christ: The Religious Profession the Nuptials with Our Lord.

It would be difficult to enumerate all the gifts and graces that Almighty God lavishes on a true Religious. She is, as David says, that queen at the right hand of the Most High, "clothed with a robe of gold set round with variety." She is, indeed, richly adorned with proofs of the divine favor, but her highest prerogative consists in her title of bride of Christ. When a soul forsakes the world and consecrates herself to God she becomes a bride of the Redeemer, and may truly exclaim: "God alone is my treasure, my only good!" The Religious, on the day on which she is clothed with the holy habit, changes her name, thereby proclaiming that she is dead to the world, to live for Jesus alone, who died for her. The venerable Sister Frances Farnese knew no better means to urge on her Religious than by reminding them that they were the brides of Jesus Christ. "It is certain," said she, "that each of you has been chosen by God to become a saint, since He has honored you by making you His brides."

St. Augustine says to souls consecrated to God: "If you do not yet recognize your happiness, reflect on what the saints have said on that subject. Remember that you have a Bridegroom who is more beautiful than anything in heaven or on earth. What a proof of His love He has given you in choosing you to be His brides! From this you should understand how you ought to respond to His

love." St. Bernard says: "O beloved bride of Jesus Christ, think no more of self nor of the world! Thou art no longer thine own, thou dost belong no more to the world, but to thy God, to whom thou hast consecrated thyself. Forget all else, and think only of pleasing and serving more faithfully the Bridegroom who has chosen thee in preference to so many others."

When the world with its blandishments seeks to ensnare thy heart, O beloved of Jesus Christ, answer in the words of St. Agnes: "Depart from me; my heart belongs to God entirely and forever. Thou desirest my love, but I can love none other than Jesus Christ, my God, who first loved me." A Religious speaks in the same strain on the day of her profession when the Bishop presents to her the veil: "My Bridegroom has covered my face with this veil that, neither seeing nor seen, I may suffer no other love to enter my heart save that of my Bridegroom Jesus Christ."

Praising and exulting in the Lord, say to Him: "I have found Him whom my soul loveth. I will embrace Him with my love, and will never let Him go. My Beloved has given Himself entirely to me, and it is just that I should give myself entirely to Him." "My Beloved to me and I to Him" (Cant. ii. 16).

The children of the world are accustomed to make grand preparations for a wedding, which they celebrate with magnificent ceremonies. At the nuptials of the heavenly Bridegroom with the Religious, that is, at the solemnity of the religious vows, we behold similar preparations. In both cases we find, first, the irrevocable consent, given in presence of ecclesiastics and witnesses; secondly, the mutual surrender of the two parties, one to the other;

thirdly, the indissoluble bond and the sealed contract; fourthly, the separation and departure from parents and relatives.

First, the irrevocable consent. A Religious chooses Christ for her Bridegroom when, in presence of God's representative and her fellow-Sisters, she vows before the Lord to love none other than Him. And as in worldly marriages the contract is sealed by the expression: "I will," so the Religious unites herself to Jesus Christ by the words: "I promise," or "I vow." Her consent is not forced, but voluntary; for, prior to admission to holy profession, the novice is well instructed in the Rules and Constitutions according to which she makes her vows; she understands their extent and consequences even in the least details. At the end of her probation, she is perfectly free to choose between the religious state or that of the world.

As regards the consent of the heavenly Bridegroom there can be not the least doubt. Tell me who called you to the religious state? Who chose you for the bride of Christ? Was it because of your prudence, your distinguished family, or your engaging manners? O no! The grace of God, regardless of your want of merit, descended upon you; God chose you for His bride in preference to many worthy souls. From God came those interior movements that urged you to forsake the world and give yourself to Him. That sermon which impelled you to the execution of your project; those salutary admonitions of your confessor, by which Almighty God offered you the dignity of the heavenly nuptials; that interior strength and courage which you felt for the accomplishing of your good resolutions; that special light and consolation by which you tasted in advance the blissful union with

your Beloved—all these came from on high. Do you ask for further signs and proofs of Almighty God's acceptance of your promise? Be assured that He was present at your profession, that He heard your vows as clearly as you can perceive His voice in your soul. If you still doubt His acceptance of your promises, recall the reward that He has promised those that choose Him instead of parents and brethren and all other things. "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting" (Matt. xix. 29). God Himself, eternal beatitude, is promised to those who, after their entrance into the cloister, live only for Christ our Lord.

Secondly, the mutual surrender and acceptance. It follows from this agreement, or mutual consent, that Almighty God does actually take possession of the Religious, body and soul. St. Augustine, therefore, calls religious profession a marriage which Christ celebrates with the soul, while she, by the vow of chastity, resigns to Him her person. This was the thought of that pious Religious who, when tempted by the impure spirit, used to say: "Never more shall I open the gates to you. The citadel is already in the hands of another. I have given it over to God. I no longer have any command over it." St. John, in his Apocalypse, describes the joys in store for virgins: "No one can sing the canticle except those hundred and forty-four thousand who were purchased from the earth. The brides of the Lamb bear His name and His Father's name written on their forehead, and they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes" (Apoc. xiv. 1 *et seq.*). Why do those virgins bear the name of the Lamb

on their forehead? To proclaim that Almighty God is their only Master. O how joyfully should a Religious submit to her heavenly Bridegroom, exclaiming with all her heart: "I belong to God alone. He is my only Lord and Master!" The spouse in the Canticles says: "Our bed is flourishing" (Cant. i. 15). The weary find their sweetest rest on their peaceful bed. And the Lord rests nowhere with greater delight than in the heart of His beloved bride whose only Lord He is. Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom, the Lover of souls that surrender and sacrifice themselves to Him entirely, will not allow Himself to be outdone in generosity and devotedness; He will not fail, on His part, to be their faithful defender and protector, to reward them with sweetest consolation and manifold graces for their self-sacrificing labors, to aid and encourage them in striving after perfection, to enrich them with His blessings, and finally to receive them into the mansions of His heavenly Father, where they shall enjoy with Him that everlasting peace and happiness, of which the Apostle writes: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9).

Thirdly, the irrevocable contract of union. The Religious, by her profession, forms a contract with Almighty God that can not be dissolved. The bond of marriage is loosened only by death, as says St. Paul: "A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband die, she is at liberty" (1 Cor. vii. 39). But the bond of love between Christ and the soul is, on the contrary, not broken by death, but intensified and rendered infinitely sweeter by the blessed vision of the Beloved in heaven. The Prophet Osee foretold this: "I will

betroth thee to Me forever" (Osee ii. 19). The following words of Holy Scripture apply very beautifully to the three vows of religion: "A threefold cord is not easily broken" (Eccles. iv. 12). The soul is most intimately united to her Redeemer by the threefold cord of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Well may she call that day blessed on which she laid the foundation of the religious life. She is bound by a lasting obligation. She can not abandon the state into which she has entered by the vows. As long as life lasts, the tender union of love between her and her Beloved must remain uninterrupted, and in heaven its sweetest fruits shall be enjoyed.

Fourthly, the separation and departure from parents and relatives. The spouse of Christ voluntarily abandons riches, social pleasures, worldly honors, home and relatives, in order to follow her Lord and to serve Him in the seclusion of the cloister, "in the courts of the house of our God." To the brides of Christ in particular may be applied the words of the Psalmist: "Behold now bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God" (Ps. cxxxiii. 1). All God's servants are here called upon to praise Him: they who actually live in His house, His chosen ones, the elect of heaven, as also those that are standing in His courts. Religious souls, though not yet admitted to the celestial paradise, stand near to it. They are in the outer courts, and are privileged to receive the sweetest heavenly favors. They live in constant union with their heavenly Bridegroom, although they are not yet actual residents of His celestial palace. To be more sure of being eternally united to Him, they have left father and mother, home and friends, and

all that was nearest and dearest to them in the world.

Perfect abandonment to the will of God is the characteristic of the ideal Religious—the faithful spouse of Christ. Not alone with the mouth, but truly with her heart, must she utter the prayer: *Fiat voluntas tua!* Let her make these reflections with Fra da Bergamo: "The perfection at which I should aim is this: to keep the inclinations of sense within me subject to reason, and my human reason subject to the will of God. This one point gained embraces all; therefore this shall be the object of my care." With Thomas à Kempis let her pray: "O Lord, grant me always to will and desire that which is most acceptable to Thee and which pleaseth Thee best; let Thy will be mine, and let my will always follow Thine, and agree perfectly with it. Grant that I may die to all things that are in the world, for Thy sake love to be despised and to be unknown in the world. Grant that I may rest in Thee, and that my heart may be at peace in Thee."

Our Lord said one day to St. Mechtildis of her sister St. Gertrude: "I have united My heart so intimately with hers, through the attractions of My mercy, that she has become one with Me. On this account she obeys Me so readily that the relation and harmony which exist between the members of the body and the will can not be more intimate than that which exists between Gertrude's soul and Mine. As the hands move without delay on the first impulse of the will, because they are entirely submissive to the dictates of the soul, and as the eyes open at once to obey, so does Gertrude attend to My presence, that she may comply with My every purpose." O my Jesus, make me another St. Gertrude! All the powers of my soul long for Thee and desire nothing

but Thee. All my desires fade into this one—to possess Thee and shelter Thee in a loyal heart. Come, oh, come and dwell in Thy poor servant! She longs for no other service, no other labor, than the unceasing occupation of living united with Thee and doing Thy adorable will. She implores Thee to deal with her as Thou hast done with Thy bride St. Gertrude, that her poor heart also, when once Thy throne and dwelling-place, may, in modest measure, be a place of rest and joy to Thee.

O dear St. Gertrude! perfect spouse of Jesus Christ, remember the promise thou hast made to those who confide in thee. Pray that the love and the grace of God may always be with me.

CHAPTER VIII.

State of Perfection: How to Recognize Vocation to the Religious Life.

THE members of the Church have each and all a work to do for God, but not every member of the Church has a vocation. A vocation is a call to a state of perfection. A state is a permanent position, by which one stands on a different footing from one's fellows in regard to liberty and right. The word is a term of the Roman lawyers. Perfection is the love of God, and is not necessarily annexed to any state. The collier who loves God better is more perfect than the monk who loves Him less. But one state is more perfect than another state, inasmuch as it carries with it more engagements and more practices that either help to the love of God (as does the obligation of reciting the Divine Office), or remove obstacles to that love (as does the vow of poverty). A vocation is never obligatory under pain of sin to take up and accept; it is the voice of God, not commanding, but counseling. "He that can take, let him take," says Our Lord in the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew, which chapter is the authority in the Gospels for the doctrine of vocation. All who enter on a state of perfection enter uncommanded and unconstrained. The special militia of the Church, consisting of the priesthood and the regular Orders, is a volunteer army: there is no conscription; but volunteers have never failed, and never will: the love of Christ crucified and of the Eucharistic Jesus is a motive upon the hearts of some of the youth of every generation.

In this the New Law differs from the Old: the Levites in the Old Law, by the mere fact of their being born of the tribe of Levi, were obliged to dedicate themselves to the service of the altar (Exod. ii. 1; iv. 14; Numb. iii. 5-12): in the New Law it is not a question of birth, but of personal choice. A vocation is well described by St. Ignatius: "All who have judgment and reason will offer themselves entirely to labor: but they who shall wish to show greater loyalty, and to signalize themselves in the perfect service of their eternal King and universal Lord, will not only offer themselves entirely to labor, . . . but will make offerings of greater value and greater moment."* A vocation, then, is a *special call* from God to a state of higher perfection than that of ordinary Christians. This *special call,* wherever it takes effect, involves two things: a wish to follow the call, and fitness to follow it. The call is heard in the inward sanctuary of the heart. The wish is not a desire of flesh and blood, but a grace from our "Father who is in heaven," often quite against the natural liking (Matt. xvi. 17, 23, 24). At the first breathings of a vocation the young soul of the recipient is "troubled at the speech," as was Mary at the voice of the angel: then it is bidden "not to fear," for it has "found grace with God"; and that child is "blessed" among all its playmates (Luke i. 28, 29, 30). Of fitness the person called is not the judge, but ecclesiastical and religious superiors, to whom he submits himself for probation and trial. It is a piece of Protestantism to scoff at vocations: we should at least praise God's gift, though not offered to ourselves. It is the glory of a large and happy Catholic family to produce a vocation.

*Strictly, St. Ignatius is not describing a vocation here, but the readiness to accept a vocation, if given.

A sound Catholic is glad to have brother or sister, uncle or aunt or cousin, or child, who has "pleased God, and is found no more" in the ordinary walks of life, "because the Lord hath taken and translated him" to something higher and better (Gen. v. 24).

As regards vocation to the religious life, "though all in general who worship God may be called religious," says St. Thomas, "the name is specially given to such as dedicate their entire lives to the worship of God; as the name of contemplatives is bestowed not simply on persons who contemplate, but on such as devote their whole lives to contemplation."

A Religious is one who devotes his whole life to God under a rule approved by the Church. Such a rule includes the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; and beyond that each several Order has its own prescribed way of life.

This is the first benefit of a religious vocation, that one knows what to do with one's self, and has a regular method of living for God. "I do not wonder," said Dr. Johnson in the year 1761, "that where the monastic life is permitted, every Order finds votaries and every monastery inhabitants. Men will submit to any rule by which they may be exempted from the tyranny of caprice and of chance." Caprice and chance, it may be added, are the undoing of all efforts after piety. A second advantage is that, like Alpine climbers, religious men are roped together, so that every man is supported by the rest; and they have guides. In a religious house one is not lonely, not without counsel and direction. Nothing shows better how dear the Religious are to the heart of God than this, that to them above other men has gone down the legacy which Christ bequeathed to His disciples: "Ye shall be hated of all men for My

name's sake" (Matt. x. 22). Whenever tyrants begin to persecute the Church of God, they strike first at the Religious Orders: them they fear and detest beyond the rest. What Satan so abominates, our divine Saviour correspondingly loves. When Jesus "looks upon" a young man "and loves him," we can not be surprised if He calls him to the religious life (Mark x. 21), or to the priesthood (Matt. iv. 19), or to both together. "But every one hath his proper gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that. . . . But as the Lord hath distributed to every one, as God hath called every one, so let him walk" (1 Cor. vii. 7, 17).

Father Humphrey, in his *Elements of the Religious Life,* writes on vocation: "He who enters the religious state must do so with full deliberation and sufficient knowledge. This knowledge must be not merely general and speculative, but particular and practical, and such as is arrived at by prudent judgment. The religious state must be considered with special relation to this particular person, taking into account his powers and capabilities, and other both intrinsic and extrinsic conditions. It is not true that everything which is best in itself is best for every individual.

"Counsel should be sought of good men who are of sound judgment with regard to what constitutes and concerns holy and religious life, and, if possible, of men who have themselves had experience of religious life. There should be taken into account not merely the person's own unaided powers, but along with these the divine assistance.

"Desire for the religious state is itself, as a rule, from the Holy Ghost, and this desire is to be entertained as coming from Him. The Holy Ghost may, however, cause the desire of a thing the accomplish-

ment of which He does not will. He sometimes instils the desire as a means of merit, even if the desire is never to be fulfilled, and even if it is not expedient that it should be fulfilled. Hence, even if it is morally clear to a Religious Superior that a particular person has been moved by the Holy Ghost to ask for the religious habit, he will nevertheless rightly refuse him if it is not expedient for the Order that he should be received. The desire is given for this end chiefly that a man should deliberate, take counsel, and test his motives. . . . If escape from temporal annoyances should remain in reality the one and only motive for leaving the world, it will not suffice as a reason for entrance into Religion. There would in that case be no prompt will to aim at the perfection which is the proper end of the religious state, no alacrity to bear its burdens, and no confidence in looking for and begging the necessary succors of divine grace. The man would either not persevere, or he would not make progress. Religious life would be to him not a sweet yoke, but a grievous burden.

"It is not to be supposed that all, or that the greater number of bad Religious, had never been called. It is one thing to be called and it is another to follow the calling and constantly to persevere therein by faithful cooperation with the direction of the divine grace.

"The common and sufficient signs of true vocation to the religious life are two in number. These are found when a man is fitted for the state, being endowed with those qualities which that state demands, and when at the same time, keeping steadfastly in view the end for which he was created, he, in serious deliberation, constantly finds that the religious state commends itself to him, and he forms a judgment

that, with the aid of God, he will easily in that state attain his end. It is in this way that God is wont to call men to the religious state, by inspiring both inclination and trustful confidence, there being always supposed any special fitness which may be required."

The points to be considered are fitness, pure intention, internal inspiration, earnest desire, counsel, serious deliberation.

To recognize and to follow one's vocation, prayer is important; humble, persistent, trustful prayer for light, direction, and strength. God lends a ready ear to prayer that is characterized by humility, sincerity, fervor and childlike confidence. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Luke xi. 9). Let the aspirant to the religious life constantly exclaim with young Samuel: "Speak, Lord; show me what Thou hast in store for me; I am ready to hearken to Thy call and to do Thy will," or with the Royal Psalmist: "Make the way known to me wherein I should walk, for I have lifted up my soul to Thee, O my God!"*

*Father Rickaby, S.J. *Ye Are Christ's.*

CHAPTER IX.

The Question of a Vocation to the Religious State.

THE question of vocations to the religious state is sufficiently important to engage the most careful study of confessors. I distinguish between a *general* and a *special* vocation to the religious life. By *general* vocation I understand the invitation of Our Lord extended to all Christians to follow Him in the practice of the evangelical counsels. The *special* vocation is an act of divine Providence, by which God calls certain individuals, prompting them, *fortiter et constanter,* to embrace the religious state. In both vocations God gives the necessary, even superabundant graces, to fulfil the obligations of the religious state, and to secure eternal salvation. The general vocation, however, does not of itself furnish the means to practice the evangelical counsels, nor does it impose the obligation to enter the religious state; but the necessary graces are to be obtained by prayer. And it assures an easier way to be saved than in the world. A special vocation gives us the necessary graces for the performance of certain duties, and at the same time imposes a strict obligation to obey the divine summons, a neglect of which would endanger our eternal salvation. Speaking of this special vocation, St. Alphonsus remarks: "He who, neglecting a divine vocation to the religious state, remains in the world, will hardly be saved, because God will refuse to give him in the world those abundant helps which He had prepared for him in Religion; and although (absolutely speaking) he could be saved without these helps, yet without them he will not in fact be saved."

Could a person having good motives and barred by no serious obstacles enter the religious state, without any special vocation, but merely following the general invitation of Christ which says: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast . . . and come, and follow Me"? (Matt. xix. 21.) Most certainly; for Our Lord places no restrictions; His invitations as well as His promise of eternal reward to those who heed His invitation are *universal.*

Christ invited all to the practice of the counsels; He specifies a good will as the only condition: "If thou *wilt* be perfect." But did He not likewise say: "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given . . . He that can take, let him take it"? (Matt. xix. 11, 12.) Our Lord here refers to the vow of chastity, which requires self-denial; yet this, like the practice of mortification, is possible for all. The Fathers of the Church, commenting on the *Qui capere potest, capiat,* give to it this meaning: He that is willing to take this counsel, let him take it courageously, and God will give him sufficient strength to keep it. Cornelius à Lapide sums up the patristic explanation when he writes: "Here the evangelical counsel of celibacy is promulgated by Christ, and proposed to all, nay even counseled, but not commanded; for St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom maintain that the words: 'He that can take, let him take it,' are the words of one exhorting and animating to celibacy. Moreover, it is signified that, as Christ gives this counsel, it is in our power to fulfil it if we invoke the grace of God and earnestly cooperate with it. Nor does the expression 'He that can take,' do away with the force of this; for all that this means is, that continence is a difficult thing; and he who is willing to put restraint on himself, let such a one embrace continence, let him

take it. It must be assumed, therefore, that all the faithful have power of continence, not proximately, but remotely."

Christ invited all to the practice of the evangelical counsels, as the Fathers and Doctors of the Church explain, by imposing upon themselves the obligation of a vow (*per modum voti*); for He asks a complete renunciation of self and earthly goods of those who wish to follow Him closely. One who retains the faculty (right) to marry, to possess property and personal independence, can not be said to have left all things to follow Christ. To the practice of the counsels a person is bound only by vow, that is, by embracing the religious state. It is this religious state, and no other, to which Our Lord invites all. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. xvi. 24). *Si quis vult,* St. John Chrysostom explains, *"Sive mulier sive vir, sive princeps sive subditus, hanc ingrediatur viam."* And every one that follows the divine invitation shall receive his reward. "And every one that hath left home . . . for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting" (Matt. xix. 29). But does not St. Paul write to the Corinthians: "Every one has his proper gift from God, one after this manner and another after that"? (1 Cor. vii. 17.) Yes, and in the preceding verse he recommends to all Christians the single life, that is, one consecrated to God: "I would that all men were even as I myself." He counsels such a life for every one of the faithful. How could he advise it, if it were not in the power and good pleasure of every one who asks for the necessary help from above? The general invitation to embrace the religious state is a desire of the Lord ex-

pressed to all men, a blessing offered to all; yet He foresees that the majority will pursue another course, that "not all will take this word, but they to whom it is given" (Matt. xix. 11). Christ does not mean to say that it is given to some and not to others; but He shows that unless we receive the help of grace, we have no power at all of ourselves. But grace is not refused to those who desire it; for Our Lord says: "Ask and you shall receive." The general vocation does not of itself give the immediate power to follow the evangelical counsels, as a special vocation does, soliciting the will by an interior grace; but every one has the power to obtain it by prayer and good works. Commenting on the words of St. Paul, "Every one has his proper gift," St. Ambrose says pointedly: *"Elige statum quemvis, et Deus dabit tibi gratiam competentem et propriam ut in illo statu decenter et sancte vivas."* All the faithful have the "proper gift" and may follow the counsels—*in actu primo*—if they earnestly ask the grace of God and use the proper means; yet *in actu secundo,* all do not make use of it, but prefer another state of life. It is possible for all to keep the Religious vows. To deny this possibility would seem to favor the doctrine of Calvinism. The religious state is accessible to all, and as St. Thomas of Aquin remarks, "it is a coat of mail which fits not Saul alone, but is adapted to all; with it, all may conquer and obtain the crown of eternal life."

It is certain, however, that God offers to some a special vocation to the religious state. Those who receive such a call can not refuse to heed it without offending God, and risking their eternal salvation. Suppose a man in high station and with ample means extends a general invitation to his friends to meet him at dinner; to a few he sends a special urg-

ing by adding a postscript to the printed invitation: "I want you to be present without fail;" to some others he sends a carriage to bring them to his house. While all are welcome at the table, the particularly invited guests are especially expected; their absence would be an insult to the host, and nothing short of a moral or physical impossibility would excuse them.

Now there are souls who clearly bear the signs of a special vocation to the higher life. The interior voice, which is God's own voice, has been telling them, since the days of childhood, that they would do better to enter the religious state and thereby follow more closely in the footsteps of Our Saviour. In the midst of worldly pleasure and excitement they feel an aching void in their hearts; the voice is whispering that they should renounce all and follow Him. To others a special vocation comes suddenly, like a flash of lightning; a sermon, a mission, the reading of a book, a serious illness, the death of a dear one, an unexpected misfortune, or a stinging disappointment, is directing the mind and heart to Christ and His kingdom; and the serious reflections thus aroused are sometimes fostered and illumined by divine grace, and produce the solemn resolve to live for God alone. If the will remains firm and the motives pure, the marks of a special vocation are unmistakable. A confessor, though young in years and without the proverbial "experience," will have no difficulty in deciding it, provided there be none of the particular impediments by which the Canon Law of the Church safeguards the sanctity of the religious profession.

The question may arise, whether, under such circumstances, a person would be obliged to follow without delay the divine voice urging the embrac-

ing of the religious state. Some writers on the subject caution against haste in so grave a matter; they advise long and serious deliberation to make sure of the heavenly call. They have in mind the injunction of St. John: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God" (1 John iv. 1). But he who believes the spirit calling him to a religious state, believes in the spirit of God; for evil spirits will hardly induce any person to the practice of the counsels.

Still, Our Lord Himself seems to insist on careful deliberation. For does He not say in reference to this higher state: "Which of you having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it?" (Luke xiv. 28.) Yes, the building of a tower here signifies Christian perfection; the charges necessary are, according to St. Thomas, renunciation of self and earthly goods. Although there is no need of deliberation about the means (which are to renounce all things), if one desires to follow Christ, yet the important question is whether the person who experiences the divine call is willing to renounce all, one's personal will included, in order to follow Christ. Is there in the particular case a firm will to practice the counsels? When Christ said to the youth in the Gospel, "Follow Me," the latter answered: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." This was a simple and apparently just request. But Our Lord allowed him no delay whatever: "Let the dead bury their dead." Nor would He permit another to "take leave of them that were at his house." He sternly said: "No man putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." The blessed Master would bear with no delay when He called

His apostles; they followed Him *continuo—statim. A fortiori,* there is less delay necessary in a vocation to a religious life.

The Fathers and Doctors teach the necessity of following promptly a special calling from God. St. Jerome uses strong words when he urges Heliodorus to break away from his family and friends: "Make haste! What are you doing under the paternal roof, effeminate soldier? . . . Even if your father were to throw himself across the threshold of your house, *per calcatum perge patrem; siccis oculis ad vexillum crucis evola. Solum pietatis genus est in hac re esse crudelem.*" He congratulated a certain Paulinus who had promptly obeyed the call of God, in the following beautiful words, which I dare not translate for fear of marring their beautiful force: *"Tu, audita sententia Salvatoris, 'Si vis perfectus esse, vade et vende omnia quæ habes, et da pauperibus et veni, sequere me;' verba vertis in opera, et nudam crucem nudus sequens, expeditior et levior scandis scalam Iacob."* Again the great Doctor says: "Make haste, and rather cut than loosen the rope by which your bark is bound fast to the shore." * The Angelic Doctor treats this question *ex professo: "Utrum sit laudabile quod aliquis religionem ingrediatur absque multorum consilio et diuturna deliberatione præcedente."*† He answers in his masterly way: "Long deliberation and the advice of many are required in great and doubtful matters, but in those things that are certain and determined, no counsel is required. With regard to entering the religious state, three things may be considered: First, as to the question itself, it is cer-

**Festina, quæso te, et hærentis in solo naviculæ funem magis præscinda quam solve.*

†II 2 qu. 180. a. 10.

tain that to enter the religious state is better than not to enter it; and he who doubts this, gives the lie to Christ who has given this counsel. Hence, St. Augustine remarks: 'Christ calls you, but you prefer to listen to mortal man subject to error.' Secondly, the strength of him who is about to enter the religious life is to be considered. Here again there is no room for doubt, because they who enter Religion do not rely on their own strength, but on divine assistance, according to the words of Isaias, 'They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint' (xl. 31). If, however, some special impediment exists, such as corporal infirmity, debts, or the like, there should be deliberation, and advice should be taken from those who are favorable to your cause, and who will not oppose it. Thirdly, the special Order which one may desire to enter should be considered. In this case counsel may be sought from those who do not oppose such a holy project." St. Thomas clearly teaches that a special vocation to a religious life is to be followed without delay or long deliberation. *"Nescit tarda molimina Spiritus Sancti gratia."* It is a very strange thing, St. Alphonsus remarks after reading St. Thomas, that when there is question of entering the religious state in order to lead a more perfect life, and to be more secure against the dangers of the world, people pretend that you should have to move slowly, deliberate a long time, etc.; but when there is question of accepting a higher dignity, for instance, a bishopric, where there is danger of losing one's soul, they do not urge delay or inquiry into the reasons for taking it. We may safely say with the Psalmist to those who have a special vocation: "To-day if

you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." The Master is calling; hasten to follow Him. Trust in His all-powerful help.

The priest, be he young or old, who exhorts young people to enter the religious state is likely to please God, and merit a great reward in heaven. Inducing people to quit the world and give themselves to God by the practice of the evangelical counsels is an act of supreme charity. "If we knew," remarks St. John Chrysostom, "that a place was unhealthy and subject to pestilence, would we not withdraw our children from it, without being stopped by the riches that they might heap up in it? . . . This is why we seek to draw as many as we can to the religious life." Let us follow the example of the great Doctor, and gladden the Sacred Heart of the Redeemer by exhorting willing souls to follow Him in the consecrated state. *"Adducentur Regi virgines post eam: proximæ ejus afferentur tibi. Afferentur in lætitia et exultatione: adducentur in templum Regis."* Frequent instructions on the religious life, and private admonition, will turn young hearts to the great Lover of souls. It is a false and dangerous principle that young people should first get a taste of "real life" and mingle with the world before entering a convent. "He that loveth the danger shall perish in it." Experience of the world is often gained at the expense of a real vocation. The flower should be culled before its leaves begin to fade or the insects to devour its beauty. Hearts should be consecrated in the springtime of love. The Council of Trent permits young persons to take vows in the religious state at the age of sixteen, after making at least one year's novitiate. Youth is the best time to offer vows unto the Lord, and the prophet says: "It is good for a man when he has borne the yoke from his youth."

On the other hand, all those who either directly or indirectly keep persons from embracing the religious state injure both their own souls and the souls of others. St. Alphonsus teaches that parents and others who, without a just and certain cause, prevent persons from entering the religious state, can not be excused from mortal sin. The Fathers of the Council of Trent pronounce anathema against any one who, without a just cause, prevents young people from embracing the religious state.

In certain cases, however, it is not only allowable to advise persons against entering the religious life, but it is the positive duty of the confessor or spiritual director to keep people from a state for which they have no aptitude, where they evidently will not persevere, or from which they are debarred by some canonical impediment. Moralists, and canonists especially, give a list of such legitimate impediments to entrance into Religion. The principal of these are: defect of mind (unbalanced), ill-health, unsuitable age, indebtedness, public infamy, necessity of supporting parents. Some of these are *juris divini;* others are *juris ecclesiastici.* They are all learnedly discussed and fully explained in the work on *Canon Law for Regulars* by Father Piat, the eminent Capuchin canonist.*

The limitations and restrictions placed by the Church upon entering the convent will, when rightly observed, prevent an increasing number of ex-Religious. If persons leave a convent, it is not a proof in itself that they had no vocation for the religious life; it generally proves that they neglected to pray fervently for the grace of perseverance, or preferred a life of ease and comfort to the penitential prac-

**Prælectiones Juris Regularis,* auctore F. Piato Montensi. Tornaci; H. & L. Castermann.

tices of Religion, or sought their own will rather than the will of God. There was nothing lacking on the part of God, but they failed in the spirit of sacrifice so essential to the religious life, and they omitted to implore it from the Giver of all good things. Such defections, however, will not disparage the superior claims of a religious life, which St. Bernard sketched accurately centuries ago: "Religious live more purely; they fall more rarely; they rise more speedily; they are aided more powerfully; they live more peacefully; they die more securely, and they are rewarded more abundantly."*

*Bishop Stang in *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, September, 1902.

CHAPTER X.

The Love of God.

"THOU shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind" (Matt. xxii. 37). The love of God, and of our fellow-men for God's sake, is, as we all know, "the great Commandment of the law." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart," and the rest. This is, in substance, a precept the observance of which (with repentance for past sin, which it virtually includes) is essential to salvation. On the other hand, the highest sanctity can not reach beyond the perfect realization of the ideal expressed in the precept. The most ordinary Christian is bound, in a very true sense, to love God "with his whole heart;" and the greatest saint that ever lived could do no more than to love God "with his whole heart."

It is plain, then, that the love of God admits of degrees; and since all our spiritual progress may be reduced to advancement in the love of God, it is useful to strive to form some definite notions on the subject.

1. "If ye love Me," said Our Lord to His disciples, "keep My Commandments." This, which we may call "effective love," is the foundation of all. Religion does not consist, principally and fundamentally, in words, and feelings, and outward observances (though these have their place, and are necessary as helps), but in the interior obedience of the heart, in the resolute submission of the will to God's law. "Not every one that saith to Me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he

that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." This obedience must be entire. It will not do to say that we will keep eight or nine of the Commandments, and reserve to ourselves the right of transgressing the other one or two; or to observe the precepts of the Decalogue, and to neglect the Commandments of the Church. And again, our obedience, as a rule or principle of conduct, must be supreme. It will not do to say that we will obey the Commandments unless it hurts too much to do so, or that we will not break them unless some one should make it well worth our while. The martyrs suffered death rather than offend God; and in doing so they were only acting up to a principle which Our Lord Himself had repeatedly and most explicitly laid down. Now it is plain that a man who habitually lives in the disposition that for no consideration whatever would he offend God grievously, can truly be said to love God with his whole heart. And this degree or kind of love is necessary for salvation.

2. But we ordinarily associate with the word "love" some degree of feeling and emotion. And although feelings and emotions are not of the essence of religion, and would not of themselves (any more than mere words) be sufficient to secure our salvation, yet it is well that our feelings too should be enlisted in the service of God. And unless they are so enlisted, at least to some extent, our obedience is apt to fail under the stress and strain of temptation. Moreover, it is plain that God wishes to be loved not only with the effective love of the will, but with the "affective love" of the heart. Already, in the Old Testament, we find expressions which point to this affective love. "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is," cries the Psalmist, and (not

to multiply examples) the chosen people of the Jews are repeatedly spoken of as the spouse or bride of God Himself. Indeed, we may say with confidence that this desire of God for our heart's love was one of the reasons why the eternal Word not only became man, but chose to live such a life and to die such a death as we know Him to have lived and died. He knew how difficult it is for us to form an idea of God, as God, and of His attributes; how almost impossible to keep such an idea before our minds; how difficult, again, to love with the love of affection a Being of whom we can not think except by means of abstract notions. The effort to do so is like trying to speak a language with which we are imperfectly acquainted. But God in His condescension would, as it were, translate His attributes into the language of human life and action. He would be born of a human mother; and who does not know how much of tender devotion and piety among Christians is due to this blessed choice? He would take a human Heart to love us with. Not content with telling us that the lot of the poor and the mourner is blessed, He would enroll Himself formally in the ranks of the poor, and would be Himself a Man of sorrows. He would be born in a wayside stable, that all might have easy access to Him. He would lie as an infant in His crib, that children might learn to love Him. And then, after all the moving events and incidents of His life here on earth, He would die hanging aloft upon the cross, that He might draw all hearts to Himself. Truly, in the words of Bishop Hedley, "Jesus Christ makes worship easy"; and one of the ways in which He makes worship easy is by providing great abundance of fuel wherewith to kindle the flame of affective love.

3. But there is a higher kind of love than this, and the recognition of the possibility of this higher kind of love, even for us, may have a most important bearing on our choice of a state of life. The cross of Christ is not so limited in its power that it can merely arrest attention, or evoke reverent and affectionate sympathy, or awaken feelings of compunction. From the crib to the cross Jesus was engaged in doing a great work: a work which is still going forward in the world. Now, friendship or love, if it rises beyond the level of mediocrity, is not content with avoiding offence to the person loved, or with affectionate and tender feelings. It leads us to interest ourselves in the undertakings of our friends, and this in no merely speculative and platonic fashion, but in such practical sort as to desire, if it be possible, to share in those undertakings, and to help with all our power in carrying them through. And, in fact, Our Lord does invite men to share in His great work, and He has made it possible for us to help Him in carrying it through. "If you love Me," He says in effect to St. Peter, "feed My sheep." And quite apart from the dogmatic bearing of these words, as pointing to the unique position which St. Peter was to hold in the Church, they express a principle which is in some degree applicable to all of us, and is applicable in a special sense to a favored few. "If you love Me, feed My sheep." The test of love, of the higher grades of love, is readiness to cooperate in His great work for the salvation of mankind. Are we ready? Are we willing? This is a point which many persons do not consider half seriously enough.

But some one may say: "Oh, that is all very well for people who have vocations to the priesthood; but

I have no vocation." Perhaps not; and he would be a very foolish director or adviser who should attempt to induce any one to take up so grave a responsibility as that of the priesthood or the religious life if he had no vocation for it. But what, after all, is a vocation? The terms of Our Lord's invitation would seem to be general: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow Me." And again, when He speaks of the counsel of holy chastity, He says: *"Qui potest capere, capiat"*—"Let him take it who can." We must not wait for an express messenger from heaven, or a special invitation sounding audibly in our ear. Fitness for the work is the main thing; and (assuming the absence of insurmountable obstacles) fitness for the work and a genuine desire to undertake the work are in ordinary cases the two elements that go to the making of a vocation; and the desire may be regarded as the special and particular sign of the working of divine grace in the soul, assuring one, who is otherwise fit, of God's call to himself individually. Now from what has been said it is plain that a vocation does not always come to a man, as it were, ready made. It is not like a parcel tied up, and addressed, and laid on our table. Rather it is like a delicate and tender seedling which, if we tend it carefully, will grow to maturity, but if we neglect it, will wither away and die. It is plain that one who is not yet fit may render himself fit; and, on the other hand, that one who has all the promise of fitness, may, by wasting his time, by indulging frivolous habits, or by yielding to grosser temptations, very effectively spoil his own character, and quite disqualify himself for the work of the priesthood.

And so, too, as regards the desire to serve God in the priesthood or in the religious state. It may

be neglected and allowed to languish till it dies away altogether; or it may be cultivated by meditation and prayer till it matures into a firm determination. And by the same means it may often be acquired where not even the germ of it might have been previously detected. Practically, the course to be followed when we are considering the question of our state of life is, first, to pray earnestly, and seriously to consider the true end and purpose of human life; secondly, to write down our reasons on either side, and carefully to ponder them; then to form our decision, at least provisionally, and again commend it to God in prayer; and finally, to ask advice. And it is to be observed that the stage at which advice is, ordinarily speaking, most likely to be profitable comes *after* and not *before* we have taken the trouble to think the matter out for ourselves; and—be it repeated—in thinking the matter out for ourselves, we should by no means grudge the use of pen and paper. "Writing," says Bacon, "maketh an exact man;" and it will not unfrequently be found that reasons which had loomed large in our imagination shrivel up into very modest dimensions and look rather foolish when the attempt is made deliberately to write them down.

It may seem that we have wandered a long way from the subject with which we started, *viz.*, the love of God. Yet it is not so if it be true—as it unquestionably is—that the supreme test of love is generosity toward Him whom we love; and if the best kind of generosity is willingness to give up all things, including our own liberty, for His sake, in order that we may follow Him—if He should be pleased to allow us so to do—even in much labor, and in many privations and sufferings, until death. For of this we may be sure, that a desire for the

priesthood or the religious life is not quite genuine—or, at best, not quite fully mature—unless it includes a determination to face, for Christ's sake, a good deal that is unpleasant to nature and contrary to our inclinations. But we may be sure of this, too, that, notwithstanding all hardships, disappointments, or drudgery incident to his condition, there is no happiness in this world like that of the man who knows that from morning till night and from year's end to year's end he is engaged in carrying out, to the best of his ability, the work which Christ our Lord came on earth to do.

But it would be a very great mistake to suppose that this higher kind of the love of God, which manifests itself in a desire to imitate Our Lord as closely as possible, and to share His work, is to be found only among priests and Religious, or that it is not attainable in its degree by every one of us. Many circumstances may concur to make it clear that any particular person is not called to the priesthood, or to the religious state. He may have the duty of supporting, or helping to support, his parents or other members of his family; he may be physically unfit, or unsuited by natural disposition, for the duties of a priest. But no disability, financial, physical, intellectual, or moral, can hinder him from loving Our Lord with all his heart. No obstacle can prevent him from taking, as his rule of conduct, not the law of parsimony, the principle of the man who asks: "How little can I do—what is the least that I must do—in order to save my soul?" but the law of generosity, the principle of the man whose question is always: "Is there anything more that I can do to please Our Lord better, and to follow Him more closely than I have hitherto done?" There is plenty of work for God and the Church to be done

by laymen; and the law of generosity is aptly expressed by our Stonyhurst motto: *Quant je puis:* "As much as I can." Whether we be priests or whether we be laymen, in generosity toward God, at whatsoever apparent or momentary cost to ourselves, lies the secret of true joy and peace. *Quant je puis;* not "as little as I am obliged," but "as much as I can." *

*From Rev. Herbert Lucas, S.J., *In the Morning of Life,* second revised edition.

CHAPTER XI.

The Vows.—The Rules.

Divinely Appointed Means for Helping the Soul Onwards Day by Day, to its Life of Perfect Charity.

THOSE who dedicate themselves to God in the religious life do not thereby change the end of their creation. That remains forever the same, in every state of life. Union with God is the common end of all: and charity, as the mutual love between the soul and God, is the only bond of union. As, therefore, charity unites with God, even in this life, so the perfect union with God in the future life is attained by perfect charity. Consequently, it is perfect charity that brings us at once to our end and our perfection. What the religious life does for us, over and above the Christian life, is to supply us with the perfect means for gaining the end, binding us through life here below to the use of these means. This is why it is called a state of perfection; because it binds us always to tend to perfect charity, and gives us the perfect means for doing so. These means are found in the three vows of the religious life, which are instrumental to perfect charity by removing from the soul three distinct impediments thereto. These impediments to perfect charity are:

1. The love of earthly possessions.
2. The love of carnal pleasures.
3. The love of our own will.

The vow of poverty removes the impediments to perfect charity which arise from affection to external things.

The vow of chastity removes the impediments to perfect charity which arise from fleshly pleasures and creature loves.

The vow of obedience removes the impediments to perfect charity which arise from our own self-will.

In this way we see how the three vows are means to the end—or, in other words, the instruments to perfect charity. This is the distinct and repeated teaching of the Angelic Doctor.*

We all know how the view of the end, and the constant desire to attain it, moves any one to use the proper means thereto. An artisan, bent on producing a richly adorned cabinet, must have his hammer, chisel, nails, and all other needful tools. A scholar wants his books and masters; a husbandman his plow and horses; a housewife her needle and thread. It is the same with us in Religion. Our work is the formation of perfect charity to God and to our neighbor; and for this work the vows are the instruments in hand. Let every Religious, therefore, see that he uses his vows in reference to this end.

The view of this most desirable of all ends will constantly show him the need of, and spur him on to the practice of, poverty and detachment of spirit. For his great aim is to have his heart free for the life of love with God. But how can he be free if he is held by affections for, and attachments to, the things of earth? How will an eagle fly if its foot be chained? "Behold we have left all things, and followed Thee." Let them all go. By a single stroke the vow of poverty cuts them away from the soul.

*"*Patet quod consilia ad vitæ perfectionem pertinent, non quia in eis principaliter consistit perfectio, sed quia sunt via quædam vel instrumenta ad perfectionem caritatis habendam."*—Opusc.. "Cont. Retrah.." 6

How freely now the soul, disengaged from things of earth, turns to the divine Lover! And as its work is to progress in love, so, day by day, it keeps itself poor—"poor in things, but poorer still in affection to things."* Thus it is that poverty is instrumental to perfect charity; and we practice it in all its details, that by its help the soul may go on and on, day by day, more and more, to perfect love. For as we are set on gaining the end, so we are set on using the means. If we deflect from the practice of poverty, we thereby deflect from the way to the end.

But when external possessions are given up for whole-hearted love, fleshly love is there to engage the soul. Here comes in the vow of chastity, and all for the same end, to clear the heart's affections of lower love—to remove the hindrances to the divine light and love that rise from fleshly passion—that the heart being thus free and empty, the divine Lover may Himself engage it, and gradually purify, illuminate, and perfect it. Thus chastity is seen as instrumental to the main work of our perfection by perfect charity. Nor is it hard to part with human loves and lovers, to gain the divine love and the divine Lover.

But even with poverty and chastity, God's love within can not get full possession of the soul as long as self-will is the manager of things. The soul, therefore, bent on getting to perfect charity, finds it necessary to remove the impediments thereto arising from its own self-moving principle. As long as it moves even to good things by self-love and self-will, it moves not by love to God. And therefore its charity is far from perfection. A change of principle is needed. Obedience it is that supplies this change, by giving us the will of God to be done.

*Blosius, *Spec. Monach. C. de Mortif.*

And therefore the loving soul takes it as its third vow, by which to clear away the remaining hindrances to perfect love, arising so plentifully from its own natural will and selfish love.

As the civil power is from God, so is the spiritual power. Hence we yield our obedience to every rightly constituted Superior, both in the temporal and the spiritual order, since the divine authority is represented in both.

Thus in Religious life the local Superior represents the higher Superior, such as the Provincial or General of the Order. The General represents the Holy Father, and the Holy Father Our Lord's own presence and authority.

This is why our vow of obedience is taken directly to God Himself—*Promitto Obedientiam Deo*—the living Superiors representing the divine authority. This it is that gives us in Religion the ever-priceless assurance that every obedience to Rule and the living Superior is the distinct fulfilment of the divine will—and this doing of the divine will is a direct exercise of divine charity, which ever moves us to do the will of the Beloved. And as in Religion we are moving from obedience every hour of the day; we see how the divine will and love are thus brought directly to the soul, giving to us the divinely appointed means of progressing day by day in the life of charity, which always remains the essential perfection of the soul.

Over and above the vows, which appertain to religious life in general, each Order holds certain other instrumental means of perfection in hand, in the Rules proper to its own Institute.

Let it be well remembered at the outset, that these Rules are, in addition to the three vows, the divinely

appointed means for helping the soul onward, day by day, to its life of perfect charity.

We have seen how the three vows serve their purpose as means to this end, by removing three sets of impediments thereto. Now, the Rules, as St. Thomas tells us, are arranged in order to help us effectually to the keeping of our vows. Thus the vows and the Rules are all meant to serve the main purpose of helping us on to the life of perfect love with God and with our neighbor.* Who that lives in Religion will not feel the truth of this? "Thou art called a Religious," says Blosius. "See that thou art truly what thou art called."

We all know the difference between the profession of a religious life and the practice of it. We make our profession; we have the habit; we live in a religious house; we are called in name after the Order we profess; we follow the daily routine of the house. But are we inwardly and practically true religious men and women?

The meaning of the word religious is "bound again"—that is, bound again to God. A Christian is bound to God by faith, hope, and charity. A Religious is bound again to Him by the bond of special love, by which He, the divine Friend, Father, and Lover, lives a life of friendship and union with the soul of His choice; and this, by the additional triple bond of the three vows—and these well secured by the daily observances of regular life.

All this being understood, why should we not give ourselves, heart and soul, to the duties of our profession? Much will depend upon our keeping

*"*Votum religionis ordinatur sicut in finem ad perfectionem caritatis: et omnes aliæ Religionum observantiæ ordinantur ad tria vota."*—St. Thom., 2, 2, Q. 186, Art. 7 ad 1 & 2.

the main work steadily in view. The children of the world do all this in the business of life. Their main work is clearly before them. They want position, science, art, or gain: they know the means to the end, and know how to use them thereto; and right well do they use them. Reason, instinct, tell them to do it. Why are we not as wise in spirituals as they are in temporals? Our end is union with God by perfect love. Our means to this end, the vows and Rules. Do we love our poverty, chastity, and obedience? Do we love our Rules? And are we, by their means, constantly progressing toward the life of perfect love with God? The plan is simple enough; it just requires that amount of earnestness that people of the world give to their temporal concerns.

Who, then, will be found to say, "The Rules are small—and not binding under sin"?

Small, perhaps, just considered in themselves. But the point is, they are means to the great end—means, too, given us by the Church, representing Our Lord's authority and will—and when carried out in view to perfect love, they assuredly become, every one of them, distinct acts of love, gradually forming the corresponding habit. And, after all, the spiritual life is the formation of a habit, and the habit of love is formed by its acts. Each act may be small; but the repetition of acts makes the habit, and the habit makes the character.

Therefore let us mind what we are about. In divine things nothing is small. The value is from the Spirit of God, and from the progress to the end. God does not regard just how much we do, but with how much love we do it. As *The Imitation* says: "He does much, who loves much."*

*From Rev. H. Reginald Buckler's *A Few First Principles of the Religious Life.*

CHAPTER XII.

The Religious Promise.

IN the life of a Religious there is nothing more important, more truly serious, than the promise he has made to God in taking up the obligations of the religious state. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi used to say that it was the "greatest grace, after baptism, that God could bestow." If a Religious fails in his religious obligations, he fails utterly; if he is faithful to them, he is God's faithful servant.

Let us consider that the religious state is a *means to an end*, not an end in itself. It is a means adopted in order *to love God with the whole heart*. There are those who have been, in a sense, driven into Religion by the thought of their obligation to love God with all their strength, mind, and heart; and by the conviction that, being such as they were, they could not fulfil this terrible obligation in the world. There are others who, without feeling so deeply or so acutely as this, have entered Religion because they longed to love God more intensely and more continuously. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord; they shall praise Thee forever and ever" (Ps. lxxxiii. 5).

Everything that tends to keep the heart from creatures, and to diminish the power of temptation, is a means to love God more perfectly. But the religious state has the advantage of being more than an isolated attempt, or an unconnected series of

attempts, in this direction; it is what is called a state. That is to say, it sets up a stable condition of things, such as is adapted of itself, to keep off all that would interfere with God's love. Thus it is a state of perfection; for it is a state which, by its very existence, necessitates to a great extent the absence of temptation and makes detachment permanent—these two conditions being conditions which, as a rule, ensure the *perfect love of God.* A soul not bound by religious vows may be personally more perfect than a Religious, if it loves God more; but the Religious is in a more perfect *"state."* Happy is he if he lives up to it! He dwells in a "House" with a roof over his head against the elements, and strong walls against hostile attack; but the house itself with all its bolts and barriers will not make him holy unless he loves it.

Reflect, then, that God's love has drawn thee into this holy state; where, as St. Bernard says, we fall more rarely, we rise more quickly, we live with greater restraint, and we arrive at detachment more rapidly.* Nothing but His love has drawn thee. In childhood, thou wert as others; perhaps more indifferent, more intemperate, more sensual. Or if, by God's grace, thou didst awake early to His call, yet it was He who called, and no other. It was He who whispered in thine ear when thy head was bent down in recollection before the altar where thou hadst first received thy Saviour. It was He who led thee to directors who made thy way plain before thee. It was He who breathed generosity into thy young heart, urging thee to mortification and detachment. Or, perhaps, it was otherwise with thee—and it was He who lifted thee from the slough of

*"*Cadit rarius, surgit velocius, vivit parcius, purgatur citius.*"

thy sins, to conversion and to the knowledge of thy Redeemer. However it was, it was not for any merits of thine that He drew thee to Himself. Nothing can account for it except His love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3). Can any thought be better adapted than this to make thee feel that thou hast a Father in heaven?

Reflect, again, that that with which He inspired thee, and which was in thy thoughts when thou didst utter thy vows, was nothing less than *a total and absolute sacrifice of thyself to His love and service.* It is called "total and absolute," because what is given up by the vows of *poverty, chastity, and obedience* goes very far indeed to cover everything which could be given up. True, it is impossible to make vows which shall literally include every possession and every liberty. But, substantially, we do make a total renunciation; and, what is more, we wish and intend, as far as human weakness permits and the grace of the Holy Spirit enables us, to give up to God's love really and truly everything. The vow of *poverty* covers every item of worldly property which we have or shall ever have. The vow of *chastity* not only detaches us from a life which would have been sure to make us, to a greater or less degree, neglect "the things of the Lord," but it places a double restraint upon us, in a thousand matters which the infirmity of human nature makes exceedingly dangerous to our sovereign love of God. And the vow of *obedience* affects the very well-spring of our self-love, with all its innumerable streams and channels. Thus, we have made a sacrifice of freedom, power, affection, proprietorship, ease, and enjoyment. "With burnt-offerings" God has declared He "will not be delighted" (Ps. l. 18),

that is, with the burnt-offerings of the ceremonial law; but there is a kind of holocaust on which He will look with divine approval. He will not despise "a contrite and humbled heart." This is the offering of the Religious—a heart which is "broken" by the renunciation of pleasure, and "humbled" by parting with that which is dearest to man—*the sense of being one's own master.*

It is not difficult to understand how a life of this kind tends to intensify the act of charity. First of all, it is a life of sharp pangs of endurance; and, all pain, lovingly accepted, intensifies our love of God and our adherence to Him. How mistaken, therefore, art thou, O religious man, if thou dreadest, or triest to avoid, the rough things of thy religious life! For it is just these things which thou camest to Religion to find. To be a Religious, and to spend one's days in avoiding all that is irksome to the flesh or annoying to the spirit, is to be foolish and inconsistent to the last degree. Far better not to have left the world. The same may be said of him who seeks to weaken religious discipline, or to escape from rule and routine; for rule and discipline, enclosure, silence, and separation from the world, are the necessary consequences of the vows; they are the *vows reduced to practice.* Now, the object of the vows, as we have seen, is to put barriers between ourselves and the first shock of temptation. Whoever, therefore, withdraws himself from regularity, withdraws himself from the beneficent influence of his vows, and to that extent weakens the bulwarks which he himself erected with his own hand in order to be more constantly near to his God. *"Redde Altissimo vota tua!"* Pay thy vows, O Religious! Remember thy vows! Mock not thy God! Thou hast promised, and even in thy tepidity thou wouldst

not wish to unsay thy promise. Shake off thy tepidity, then, and understand that the life of him who schemes to escape rule is the life of one who is in the way to be unfaithful to his vows.

Ah! when thou didst make those holy promises how filled with horror would thy soul have been hadst thou foreseen the indifference and the sloth that were to come! For thou madest that promise in thy fervent youth; nay, perhaps thou hadst virtually made it from thy childhood, and it had led thee on, like the pillar of the Lord, to the land of milk and honey, the land of the religious life. Thou didst make that promise in the fear of God, filled with the awe of thy Creator, impressed by the inevitableness of His power, and by the majesty of His immensity. Thou didst make it with the thought of thy deathbed before thee, and of what thou wouldst wish thy life to have been when thou camest to be stretched thereon. Thou didst make it in the fervent love of God above all things, with the feeling of His beauty and the conviction that He was thy only good, thy last end, and thy all. Thou didst make it in the joyousness of divine grace, in the impulse of the Holy Spirit, in the magnanimity of His sovereign gifts, looking forward to the future as one looks forward to a pleasant journey. Thou didst make it in the hatred of sin, the loathing of its filthiness, the dread of its contamination; feeling that nothing could be sweeter or more delightful than to live pure and innocent all thy days. Thou didst make it in the ardor of the desire of perfection; in the fervor of the emulation of the saints. Thou didst make it with the anticipation of thy heavenly country, where for endless ages the base and trivial things thou didst trample upon would be repaid thee with inconceivable bliss.

At first, perhaps, these impulses continued and grew stronger. The sweetness of divine love led thee on—the fervor of a beginner made burdens light and the rough way smooth. But by degrees unfaithfulness crept upon thee. When the impulse of fervor was wanting, thy efforts grew slack. Having trusted, perhaps, more to thyself than to the grace of thy heavenly Father, thou didst fall—fall in little things, perhaps in greater. Thou didst begin to keep things back from thy sacrifice. Thou didst allow thyself to scrutinize, and hesitate, and even refuse. The holy strictness of the Rule began to displease thee. Thou didst not accept, as heretofore, the common life, the common food, the lodging, the work; thou didst fail in loving all persons equally for Christ's sake; thou didst try to cheat thy Saviour in those things which are intended to make the Religious like unto Him who bore the cross. Perhaps thy vows at that time were little before thy mind. For from renewing them with a warm heart every day, thou didst hardly remember to recall them at weekly or even monthly intervals. More than once thy conscience has surprised thee in dislike of thy vows. There were temptations to regret having made them; temptations which were not rejected, but allowed to lie in the heart and poison its life. Dangerous thoughts, of instability—even of apostasy—were not by any means strange to thee in thy hours of sadness or of sloth. Thou didst come to neglect the observances and "little things" of thy community life. Thou didst grow to be slow, unpunctual, lax, and self-seeking; to love distractions and outside work or recreation; to disturb thy brethren by singularity, by the seeking of exemptions, the contempt of observances, the criticisms of Superiors, and general discontent with the religious

life. Whither does all this lead? Canst thou doubt it? It leads to the abandonment of the religious life; and, therefore—since it seems that God intends thee to save thy soul by the religious life—to thy eternal ruin. Even if this thought should shock thee, and thou shouldst refuse to allow thy apostasy to be inferred from thy laxity, there is another consideration. Such a life as is here described leads to the abandonment of the desire of perfection. Nay, it is the abandonment of that desire and purpose. No one can be relaxed, unmortified, and lazy and at the same time desire to love God with such a whole heart as thou didst once long to do, and as every Religious ought to long to do. But this is a miserable and lamentable condition to be in. Those who are in the world, though they be not fervent, yet as long as they keep from mortal sin fail in fervor chiefly through their lawful occupations, their want of thought, their deficiency in spiritual instruction, and their low standard of supernatural aims. But it can not be so with the Religious. He has leisure for thought; he has been drawn into the sanctuary of God; and he has taken upon himself obligations grounded precisely on his appreciation of the supernatural. He has understood that nothing on earth is equal in value to one step of greater nearness to Christ. He has not only understood this, but has, to some extent, lived and acted up to it; so that if he abandons the desire of perfection, he abandons it through sloth, selfishness, and deliberate choice. To do this, and to continue to wear the habit and tread the cloister, is to be a cheat and a liar. No true and genuine heart could long endure to be in such a condition. There must be conversion, or there will be desertion. O my Lord and Sāviour! Thou who didst inspire me to pronounce

my vows before Thy altar, give me light and the force of Thy powerful grace, that I may understand how contemptible and pitiable a thing is a Religious who makes no effort to live up to the life of Religion!

Every Religious, then, is bound to aspire to perfection. Nor need this thought disturb any anxious heart. What he is bound to aspire to is not perfection in any absolute or transcendental sense; but such perfection as is naturally attainable by those who employ the means placed at their disposal by the religious life. That life, by its vowed renunciations, and by its consequent practical course—its prayer, its humility, its subordination of act and will, and its holy occupations—is quite certain to establish in the heart a progressive state, which may, without exaggeration, be called perfection; that is, *a remarkably close union with God, through Jesus Christ.* This the Religious is bound to desire; for such a desire is implied in the acceptance of religious obligations; because, if a Religious really accepts the obligations of his state, he either does so with the object of making himself perfect—as just explained—or he accepts them out of mere superstition, as a Stoic might have done, or even an Indian fakir. In order, therefore, to be sure that thou dost aim at perfection, thou needest to do no more than live with *exactness thy religious life.*

But it is to be feared that many Religious fail to make the most of that holy life to which they have had the grace to be called. There is, in their habitual way of living, a want of intention, a want of appreciation—in other words, a want of solicitude, about their love of their Father in heaven. The vows and the practices of Religion are helpful and salutary—but only to those who put some energy

into their use. They are divinely adapted to intensify the acts of the heart toward God, but only if the Religious thinks of it. They are most valuable in making our life one continuous lifting up of the soul toward its Creator—O happy condition! —but only if each hour is consciously used, and each act and hardship separately infused with spiritual intention. The Religious who lives his life mechanically is losing his time, and squandering precious moments which might merit for him the highest and the innermost heavens. My Father! open my eyes, that I may see light! Grant me, that from the morning, when I am summoned to prayer, till the evening, when I lay down my head in prayer to rest, I may use to the full every moment of prayer, every word of reading, every slightest Rule, every order of my Superior, every encounter with my brethren, every step in the cloister, every touch of the outward world, every vicissitude of my spirit and my flesh, every visitation of the cross—to draw me to the lifting up of my heart, and to greater nearness to Thee!*

*From Bishop Hedley's *Retreat.*

CHAPTER XIII.

General Principles of the Religious Life.

1. You have been so fortunate as to heed the voice of Jesus; you have manfully overcome the obstacles that faced you on your entrance into the sacred enclosure of the monastery; you were burning with zeal to embrace the religious exercises there practiced. But remember, it is not enough to have begun well: you must also persevere and end well; otherwise you will expose yourself to great danger and will merit greater disgrace than the man we read of in the Gospel, who, after he had successfully laid the foundation of a grand edifice, had not the perseverance to finish it. "He that perseveres to the end shall be saved."

2. Often consider what singular grace God bestowed on you in choosing you from among thousands who were much more zealous in His service than you, and who had not offended Him so often, in order that He might lead you out of the world, as He led His chosen people out of Egypt, and might conduct you into a God-fearing community as into the Promised Land. Thank Him from your heart for the great things He has done to you; thank all those who have assisted you; above all, be thankful to God's Virgin Mother. How grateful you would be to those who had saved you from shipwreck and had brought you safely to land! The Religious who does not thank God daily for the grace of vocation shows that he does not know its value, and no longer deserves it.

3. In all your actions keep in sight the purpose

for which you entered the Order. You took this step because you did not wish to rest satisfied with a common grade of virtue acquired by faithfully keeping God's Commandment—this grade of perfection is common to many people out in the world—but you desired to become a truly devout Religious, aiming after the highest perfection attainable here below. With the assistance of grace your soul desires to enter into close union with God. Encourage yourself in this, then, as St. Bernard used to do, by asking yourself with deepest recollection of soul as he did: "Bernard, why did you come here? Why did you choose this kind of life?" Unless you take close aim you will shoot wide of the mark.

4. This intimate union of the soul with God is interior rather than exterior, and is reached by frequent interior acts of faith, hope, and charity, and similar acts of virtue, joined to praise, adoration, and humility. You must do what Jesus Christ has done, and all the saints after Him: namely, perform all your exterior actions with perfect interior recollection of soul, with devout intention, and with entire conformity of your will to the divine will. Union with God, who is a pure spirit, can take place only with a perfectly purified soul.

5. Learn from Jesus Himself the way to become truly interior. "Deny yourself," He says; that is, combat the cravings of nature which, however harmless and pardonable in appearance, are still punishable and tainted with self-love, unless they are purified by a good intention. "Take up your cross"—that is, overcome your natural heaviness and dislike, so as to maintain yourself in the practice of the duties to which your newly-chosen state obliges you; "and follow Me"—that is, strive always to do, not your will, but His. Self-will and unmortified ap-

petites as truly hinder perfection as the broad and pleasant way prevents entrance into everlasting life.

6. If perfection, as I have pictured it, appears difficult—and it is difficult, indeed, if measured only by your strength—then excite yourself to confidence in the goodness and power of God, who in His mercy called you. He will never let you want the strength necessary to accomplish what He requires of you. See how many have happily reached the goal who were weaker than you are and had less assistance. Therefore, do not invent excuses to defend your timidity: on the Day of Judgment no excuses will be accepted. He that does his best and trusts in God always attains the end in view.

7. It is a painful surprise to meet Religious who have spent ten and twenty years in a monastery and still cling to the world, are still slaves to their whims, touchy under the slightest difficulties, more lukewarm in their devotions and unsteady in their habits than people out in the world. Alas! to lead such lives—is it not to abuse the vocation we profess? Is not this, in very truth, making sport of Religion, and deceiving one's fellow-man? In such a pass are we not in danger of losing our souls? Our Saviour, though meekness itself, called down a terrible curse upon the barren fig-tree. Think you He will not pass a much more severe sentence on souls who in the sacred habit of Religion fail to practice the genuine virtues of Religion? Therefore I feel compelled to cry out with Moses (Deut. xxxii. 29), Oh, that persons favored by God in so extraordinary a manner would be wise and would understand! Would that they understood the singular grace which God bestowed upon them by inviting them to His divine espousals. Merciful God, grant them the grace that henceforth they prepare themselves with scrupulous

care for the strict account which Thou wilt require of them on Judgment Day for all the graces which Thou hast conferred upon them. Not change of dress, but change of manners, constitutes true religious life.

According to Father Dirkink, S.J., a perfect novice, who in time will become a true Religious, may be known by the following signs:

1. He never commits a venial sin with full deliberation.

2. He conceals nothing from his Superiors, nor does he wish that they should remain in ignorance of anything about him whatever.

3. He bears it without bitterness if upbraided for his faults.

4. He cheerfully does penance for failings which scarcely deserve a punishment.

5. He takes advantage of every chance to deny and mortify himself.

6. He always speaks of matters that are in keeping with his vocation.

7. He keeps so close a guard over his external conduct that a searching eye finds hardly anything to blame.

8. Books that excite virtuous resolutions he reads with greater fervor and relish than those which merely satisfy curiosity and engage the mind.

9. He entertains no special friendship that rests on purely natural grounds.

10. He steadily combats self-love by undertaking, with the consent of his Superiors, whatever he dislikes.

11. He struggles with success against weariness at prayer, reading, and other spiritual exercises.

12. He estimates the practical value of meditation not by the consolations he experiences, but by the

amount of love he acquires for virtue and the care he takes to avoid wilful imperfections.

13. He longs for perfection, not to benefit self, but to please God.

14. He avoids the smallest violation against the Rule and holds nothing unimportant that bears on perfection.

15. He frequently consults his novice-master and submits to his guidance to the intent:

(*a*) That he may be protected against the danger of mortally offending God, and lessen the number of venial sins and imperfections.

(*b*) That he may practice virtue with safety.

(*c*) That he may learn to perform his interior and exterior actions more perfectly from day to day.

16. Of several good works he aims to choose the more perfect.

17. He shows no preference for any occupation, office, or place, but simply accommodates himself to every situation and circumstance.

18. He is always satisfied and cheerful, never ill-humored or self-willed.

19. He is not easily worried about anything, and construes matters in the best light; but things that may injure the community, a wrong-doer, or a neighbor, he does not fail to report.

20. A novice fashioned in this mould and rooted in solid virtue leaves the novitiate with such a dread of sin and imperfection, and such a love of virtue and perfection, that all alone and without fear of reproof he will lead a life as virtuous, pure, and guarded, as if he were constantly under the observing eye of a most venerated Superior.

I conclude with the short advice, "Do this and thou shalt live." Yes, you will live in your com-

munity with pleasure, your life will be blameless, godly, and perfect. as becomes a true follower of Christ. I entreat you, only make a brave start; for "well begun is half done." "When you begin," says St. Bernard, "begin well; if you do, you will soon reach the end." And when, like the angels ascending, you have mounted, as up a Jacob's ladder, the rounds of virtue, you will find the Lord leaning upon the topmost round, and you will be clasped in the blessed outstretched arms of your God.*

Perseverance in prayer is a means to perseverance in one's vocation. The novice must have frequent recourse to God, imploring the grace of perseverance, for that grace, says St. Augustine, is not obtained without prayer. But the novice tempted to leave the Order into which God has lovingly introduced her, ought not to be satisfied with saying: "O God, enlighten me, that I may know what I must do!" No, let her pray with confidence in this way: "After giving me the vocation, O my God, give me also the strength to persevere in it!" Let her pray that God may confirm her in her vocation, that she may ever know and love God, and that she may, to the end of life, abide in His grace. Let her be very candid with her Superiors in regard to her interior struggles, and humbly submissive to their directions. Childlike obedience will bring peace to her soul in connection with the divine Master's prayer: *Fiat voluntas Tua.*

*From Verheyen's *General Principles of the Religious Life.*

CHAPTER XIV.

The Renewal of Vows.

As we read in Father Humphrey's *Elements of the Religious Life:* "St. Thomas attributes to religious profession, and as an effect of religious profession, remission of all punishment which is due for sin, and this as it were *ex opere operato.* He does so on the ground that if a man by means of *some alms* can satisfy for his past sins, that man can satisfy for *all* his past sins who gives himself wholly and without reserve to the service of God. Such an offering exceeds every kind of satisfaction, or even of public penance, in the same way as a holocaust exceeds a sacrifice.

"Religious profession is, according to St. Thomas, an act which is so excellent that, if it is made in an ordinary way from an affection of charity, even if without extraordinary fervor, it suffices, as a rule, to satisfy for all sins of the past. This effect, therefore, would follow, not from extrinsic privilege, but from the perfection of an act which is such as is religious profession. Besides this, however, there has been granted to some Orders, by concession of the Sovereign Pontiff, a plenary indulgence at entrance into the Order, and another at the hour of death."

Religious profession is called a second baptism by St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, and St. Bernard, and because the act of consecrating one's self entirely to God by the three vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity is so noble and heroic, the saints also compare the religious life to martyrdom. The religious

life is indeed one long, incessant martyrdom. At first glance, as St. Bernard observes, nothing appears to us so frightful as those early martyrdoms by fire and sword, rack and cross, and other instruments of torture. But the martyrdom of the Religious, in respect to its duration at least, is much more severe and painful. The martyrdom of those heroic witnesses to Christ often ended with one stroke of the sword. The suffering of the Religious ends not with one blow. Day after day and year upon year she is kept upon the rack of humiliation and mortification; her own will and judgment are consumed by the fire of obedience; she must die to self-love by the crucifixion of the spirit. The martyrs, according to the saints and Councils of the Church, obtained pardon of all their sins by their martyrdom, and straightway entered heaven without passing through purgatory; for martyrdom is a supereminently excellent and heroic act, as Christ Himself tells us: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). More than his life a man can not give. The giving of one's life to God in a Religious Order, the absolute and complete sacrifice of one's self by the perpetual vows, is a work so excellent and so heroic that a man by it gives to the Lord all that he has, all that he is, and all that he can give. By that act, saints and theologians teach us, he obtains pardon and exemption from the punishment due his sins. He stands before God very much like one newly baptized or as a martyr. Hence the profession of the vows is likened to baptism and martyrdom.

From the excellence and perfection of the religious profession we can understand how very advantageous it is frequently to renew the holy vows.

New obligations are not assumed by this renewal, but what has already been undertaken is commemorated and confirmed. By the renewal of her vows, the Religious gives expression to her gratitude, her joy and exultation. She proclaims by it that she does not find the religious life a burden, and that she does not regret having assumed it.

The vows should be renewed, first, to increase devotion, an end to which the renewal very powerfully contributes, as is the experience of all who do so with fervor and sincerity. It should be made to recall the obligations taken to God. It should tend to keep constantly before one's eyes the promises made on the day of profession, and to reanimate one's zeal in striving after virtue and perfection. Lastly, the renewal of the vows should be made as a protection against temptation, especially that which leads the soul to become weary, disheartened, gloomy, and fretful.

This renewal of vows should be made especially on the anniversary of profession. On that day the Religious should seriously remind herself of the offering that she made to Almighty God; she should reflect on His design in calling her to the religious vocation, and with new zeal pursue the work of her sanctification. What the Lord wished the Israelites especially to lay to heart on their departure from the land of Egypt was the memory of the day on which He had shown them so great mercy. So earnest was He on this point that He commanded them to celebrate an annual festival of eight days in remembrance of it. They were to eat on that day with festive ceremonies a lamb in memory of the lamb which had been slaughtered when they were freed from captivity. God ordained this in memory of their liberation from corporal captivity, though

they were not thereby made spiritually better. How much more reason has the Religious to celebrate that day on which the mighty and merciful hand of God liberated her from the bondage of the world, the captivity of the soul, and led her on the way not to the earthly but to the heavenly land of promise! But this renewal of vows should be made, according to the exhortation of St. Francis Xavier, not only on the anniversary of profession, but daily. This great and zealous apostle says: "There is scarcely any means so efficacious, any weapon so powerful for Religious in their combats against the temptations of the devil and the flesh, as the renewal of the vows." He advised us to arm ourselves against the enemy of our soul by making this renewal every morning after prayer and meditation. It is a very excellent devotion in connection with Mass and holy communion.

The renewal of vows should be made, moreover, in gratitude to Almighty God for the grace of vocation and for all other favors and blessings. The Church annually solemnizes the dedication of her material temples; and it is expedient that you should celebrate the feast of the consecration of your soul, that living temple of God. Gratitude expressed by works is the best. This renewal, therefore, must be very pleasing to God, provided that it is made with the intention of confirming one's vows and gaining strength to observe them more perfectly in the future. The Apostle Paul admonishes to this when he says: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ephes. iv. 23). The renewal must be not only verbal, but spiritual. Recall the zeal, the fervor of your first day in the novitiate. Begin anew with the same zeal, the same firm resolves. That is really a renewal, a self-renewal, highly pleasing to

God, and an excellent act of thanksgiving for graces received.

Sigh with holy Job: "Who will grant me that I might be according to the months past, according to the days in which God kept me? When His lamp shined over my head, and I walked by His light in darkness?" (Job xxix. 2, 3.) Are you troubled and disheartened? Think of the magnificent recompense in store for you. "Lose not your confidence," says St. Paul, "which hath a great reward" (Heb. x. 35).

The evil one is apt to tempt and torture young Religious when they are in a state of desolation. "Do you not see," he says, "that you have no peace in this house? You have lost all devotion. Everything inspires you with disgust—prayer, spiritual reading, holy communion, yes, even the community recreations. Is not this a sign that God does not want you here?" Ah, how dangerous is such a temptation, especially in the beginning of the novitiate, when the poor soul has had no experience! To emerge victorious from the struggle, let the novice reflect in what true joy of heart consists here on earth, where she is to lay up treasures of merit by much suffering. It consists in absolute conformity of one's will with the will of God. In this, also, is found the highest peace. Whether God leaves the soul in darkness, or whether He gives it consolation, peace is found only in perfect submission to His holy will. With Thomas à Kempis let the novice say: "Lord, Thou knowest what is best. Do with me as Thou knowest, and as best pleaseth Thee, and is most for Thy honor. Put me where Thou wilt, and do with me in all things according to Thy will. I am in Thy hand; turn me hither and thither as Thou choosest. Lo, I am Thy servant, ready for all

things; for I do not desire to live for myself, but for Thee. Oh, that I could do so in a worthy and perfect manner!

"Grant me Thy grace, most merciful Jesus, that it may be with me, and labor with me, and continue with me unto the end. Grant me always to will and desire that which is most acceptable to Thee, and which pleaseth Thee best. Grant that I may die to all things that are in the world, and for Thy sake love to be despised, and to be unknown in this world. Grant unto me, above all things to be desired, that I may rest in Thee, and that my heart may be at peace in Thee."

Evidently one of the favorite prayers of a fervent Religious should be the *Suscipe* of St. Ignatius: "Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my whole will. Thou hast given me all that I am and all that I possess; I surrender it all to Thee, that Thou mayest dispose of it according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough, and will have no more to desire."

In *The Following of Christ* the Lord admonishes the soul thus: "The purer the eye of thy intention is, with so much greater constancy wilt thou pass through the storms of life. Direct thy whole attention to this, that thou mayest please Me alone, and neither desire nor seek anything out of Me. But never to feel any grief at all, nor to suffer any trouble of heart or body, is not the state of this present life, but of everlasting rest.

"Think not, therefore, that thou hast found true peace if thou feel no burden; nor that then all is well, if thou have no adversary; nor that thou hast attained to perfection if all things be done according to thy inclination.

"Neither do thou conceive a great notion of thyself, nor imagine thyself to be especially beloved if thou experience great devotion and sweetness; for it is not in such things as these that a true lover of virtue is known. The progress and perfection of a man do not consist in these things."

"In what, then, O Lord?"

"In offering thyself with thy whole heart to the divine will, so that with the same equal countenance thou continue giving thanks both in prosperity and in adversity." In other words, *liberty of spirit* should be the aim of a Religious, and this she achieves by doing all things simply *Ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

CHAPTER XV.

Christian Asceticism and Common Sense.

"LET us bring common sense to bear upon religion as upon other departments of life." This is a piece of advice, excellent as far as it goes, which we read the other day in a Catholic publication, and made a note of, though indeed we rather think we have heard something like it before. Common sense is a valuable gift, or an equally valuable acquirement. To lack common sense were indeed a misfortune; to possess it, and habitually to use it, is to have laid a foundation on which a whole edifice of good qualities and habits, psychological and moral, may be reared.

But the foundation of a house is not the peak of its roof, the basement is not the topmost story; nature is not grace; and common sense is not heroism. A hero may be, and ought to be, a man of common sense; but it is not common sense that makes a hero. And when some one proclaims that religion ought to be characterized by common sense, we do well to be on the alert lest perchance he should quietly proceed from this sound principle to the mischievous assumption that in matters of religion plain common sense—or what he understands to be such—is to have the last word. Any account of virtue that seems to bring its soaring heights down to the modest level of our own eyes is more or less gratifying to our self-love.

"Let us bring common sense to bear upon religion." By all means, if by this be meant—let us

take care that our religion at least does not fall short (as it may easily do) of the common sense standard. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The children of this world go about their worldly business in a common sense fashion, adapting means to ends, and taking care not to let opportunities slip; and we do well to look to it that in religious matters we at least reach this degree of practical wisdom. But if by "bringing common sense to bear upon religion," it is meant that common sense is to prescribe limits to religious perfection, then the exhortation seems to smack of a kind of rationalism, and is hardly in harmony with the lives and teachings of the saints. Of course it may be said that all depends on your definition of terms; and if the meaning of "common sense" be so stretched and enlarged as to include, or at least to imply, faith, hope, and charity in their highest manifestations, no one could wish for a more perfect test by which to try any kind or form of religious exercise. But such is not the usual connotation of the term, and practically the stickler for common sense in religion will often be found to be one who would damp enthusiasm, pour cold water on zeal, and set bounds—unintentionally, of course—to heroism.

These remarks are suggested, not merely by the few words which we have selected as a kind of peg on which to hang them, but still more by the context in which the words occur. The writer who pleads for the application of common sense to religion does so by way of clinching an argument, or of putting beyond dispute the truth of a theory which he has just been expounding, concerning the true principles of Christian asceticism. And the theory is worth discussion, because it is one which

is, we fear, gaining ground, even among Catholics, at the present day. The writer's view of asceticism is a common sense view, and so far is good. It is too exclusively a common sense view, and so far is inadequate, and unless supplemented by further considerations tends to become mischievous, and all the more mischievous by reason of its specious appearance, and the somewhat oracular tone with which it is put forward. "The Christian fasts," we are told, "not to appease an angry Deity by suffering; this were a relic of heathen superstition, dishonoring to God and degrading to man; but that the whole man, body and soul together, may be more active in the service of God and his neighbor, his thoughts quicker, his hand stronger." And again: "It is temperance, not abstinence, the state of the trained athlete, tense, alert, vigorous, not that of the sickly starveling, faint for want of food," that "the Fathers of the Church . . . commend." And once more: "What is important is that people should be in what is called a state of training: the means are of less moment, so long as the end is attained." The writer further illustrates his principle by observing that "the cold bath, the dumb-bells and the bicycle are remedies against vice and incentives to virtue (?), as efficacious, perhaps, as the haircloth and the scourge."

Now, apart from the offensive words about appeasing "an angry Deity by suffering," to which we shall hereafter recur, there is much that is true in the remarks we have quoted; much that belongs to the legitimate domain of common sense brought to bear on religion. There are plenty of people for whom under ordinary circumstances, and apart from what the Church prescribes, no higher kind of

asceticism is reasonably feasible, so far as external acts are concerned, than "the cold bath, the dumb-bells, and the bicycle," coupled with the intention to use them for the purposes of keeping a sound mind in a sound body for the service of God and of man for God's sake. But here a distinction must be observed. It is quite true that, in a well-known passage of the first epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. ix. 24 *seq.*), St. Paul compares Christian asceticism to the training of the athlete. This training, however, is to fit the Christian athlete for the exercise not merely of head and hand, but more especially of the heart; it is a training for the exercise not merely of natural faculties, but of supernatural virtues. Still, the same degree of training is not exacted of all; and the devout bicyclist, faithful to his morning prayers, and also to his morning tub, is a type of Christian not by any means to be despised. He is doing his best according to his light; and very commendably makes use of natural means to keep out of mischief. But he is hardly a saint, and makes no pretence to exhibit in his more or less blameless life the highest ideal of Christian perfection.

To return, however, to the subject of fasting. Fasting and other austerities are, indeed, primarily intended to keep under control the passions and the animal impulses of man's composite nature. This is undoubtedly the purpose which is most frequently insisted on in the Collects of the Lenten Masses in the Roman Missal. And unless this primary purpose be achieved, there is abundant room for self-delusion in asceticism. Moreover, this particular lesson is one which always needs to be enforced, and at no time more than now. We are told (by the same writer from whom we have already quoted)

that "the dressing-gown-and-slippers idea of life is gaining ground among us;" and, with every allowance for epigrammatic exaggeration, the imputation may be admitted at least to this extent, that peace and prosperity necessarily bring with them more or less of danger lest men should settle down to such a bourgeois standard. In all ages, not excluding our own, men need the warning to keep themselves "in what is called a state of training." And provided the "state of training" be rightly understood, *viz.*, as having reference to distinctively religious activities, nothing more than this can be either required or expected from the great majority of Christians.

But the laudable desire to keep one's self "in what is called a state of training" is far from being the only motive which has led the saints of God's Church to engage in penitential exercises. The notion of "a state of training" is one which of itself involves no special relation to the central mysteries of the Christian faith, the Incarnation and death of Christ our Lord. Again and again throughout the New Testament men are either bidden or encouraged to take up the cross and follow Our Lord and to rejoice that they are privileged to share in His sufferings. It is true that suffering is not put forward as an end in itself, and no sound system of asceticism could represent it as such. But although it is not an end in itself, it is, or may rightly be called, a means in itself. That is to say, the endurance of pain or privation is not merely a means whereby a man may fit himself to perform certain actions which are meritorious of life everlasting. It is a means whereby—without the intervention of any ulterior means—merit may be gained, provided, of course, that the pain or the privation is endured, and volun-

tarily assumed, with a right motive.* That this is the case with sufferings encountered in the pursuit of duty, or under stress of persecution, or as the result of works of charity, zeal, and the like, needs no proof for a Catholic. But, as in the case of these sufferings, this special motive is set before Christians, that in undergoing them they are made partakers in the sufferings of Christ, so this same motive has in all ages led the saints, and thousands of fervent Christians who have not been saints, to desire to be as far as possible "made conformable to the likeness" of Christ suffering. To take only a few instances, which ought indeed to be superfluous, we read that St. Vincent Ferrer, from his earliest youth, practiced certain austerities "in order to bring the flesh into subjection and *in memory of the Passion of Christ;*" and we are told that the Blessed Henry Suso "was vehemently led on by his desire to bear in his body some sensible mark of his compassion (*condolentiæ*) with the most bitter Passion of Christ."† "The violence of persecution has ceased," says St. Peter Damian in effect; "why should I therefore be defrauded of the pains which I desire to undergo for the love of Christ?"‡ And he speaks of the "sweet punishment" which is borne for His love. "Christ," says Gretser, "bound to the pillar and nailed to the cross, invites all to consider and contemplate the pains which He thus endured." And who, he asks, will better bring home to himself the bitterness of those pains than he who voluntarily

*"*Deus qui corporali jejunio vitia comprimis, mentem elevas, virtutem largiris et præmia.*"—*Præf. Missæ temp. quadrag.* Cf. Gretser, *Opera* IV., 1, 55.

†Gretser, *ibid.*, p. 20.

‡*Epistola ad Petrum Cerebrosum, monachum,* apud Gretser, *loc. cit.*, p. 60.

inflicts pain upon himself?* Now this desire to partake, in however small a degree, in the sufferings of Christ, and the penitential acts whereby this desire is in a measure fulfilled, are plainly meritorious. Nor are they meritorious alone, but they are also available for expiation. Even antecedently to any explicit knowledge of a coming Redeemer, the fasting and the sackcloth of the Ninivites were pleasing to God and moved Him to forgiveness. Not, of course, that God (or "an angry Deity") takes delight in suffering as such. But that He is appeased by acts of penance, whereby man forestalls, as it were, the punishment due to his sins, is the plain teaching of Holy Scripture.† It is not the pain as such which pleases Him, but the dispositions with which the pain is endured. And without the pain the dispositions would at least be less intensely realized or actuated.

It is true, of course, that asceticism, like other good things, may be carried to excess. Neither the Fathers of the Church, nor any other sensible person, would commend "the state . . . of the sickly starveling, faint for the want of food." But, in the sentence from which we have taken these words, there lurks a fallacy, unless, indeed, it ought rather to be said that the fallacy obtrudes itself on the notice of the attentive reader. It lies in the calm assumption that no middle term can be found between "the state of the trained athlete" (fresh from his

*Gretser, *loc. cit.*, p. 62; similarly, p. 201.

†"*Quod si vernuum et absurdum est credere illud pœnitentiæ genus Deum in afflictione nostra despicere quod in semetipso dignatus est pro nostra salute perferre, quid mirum, si puniendo commissa suimet se exhibeat homo tortorem, et ad evadendum judicium sibi se constituat judicem.*"—Gretser, p. 67.

tub, or his dumb-bells, or a spin on his bicycle) and that of the "sickly starveling"; or, rather, that no third or intermediate condition can be worthy of commendation. And yet there undoubtedly is such an intermediate condition. It is that of those who, without in any degree incapacitating themselves for the work which it is their duty or their vocation to perform, yet seek to share as far as may be the pains of their suffering Saviour, and who, in so doing, pass far beyond the limits of anything that could reasonably be called mere spiritual "training." "I do not know," wrote Father Thurston a few years since, in reply to a distinguished Anglican divine, "if Archdeacon Farrar chances to be acquainted with the life of St. Francis of Assisi, or of St. Peter Claver, or of St. Vincent of Paul, or the countless other *Lives* in the annals of Christian charity. Probably he looks upon these apostles as drones in the world's hive, 'half-dazed Spanish friars' exulting in the unnatural, self-macerating misery of *convulsionnaires*. Yet these were men who gave their days to toiling for their fellow-men, and their nights to meditating upon their crucifix, inflicting pain upon themselves" [not merely that they might keep themselves "in what is called a state of training," but] "that they might resemble their Saviour more closely."* And, to borrow another illustration from the article we have just quoted, the protracted fast of those Christians, both residents and pilgrims, whose Holy Week devotions are so graphically described in the *Peregrinatio Silviæ*, was assuredly no mere exercise of spiritual drill. It was a spontaneous act of loving devotion, born of the

*Thurston, *Archdeacon Farrar on the Observance of Good Friday*, in *The Month*, May, 1895 (subsequently republished by the C. T. S.), p. 91.

desire to keep company with Jesus, as closely as possible, during the days of His Passion.*

It may indeed be alleged that the penitential practices of the saints should be regarded as, in their case, a means toward the kindling and keeping alive of the flame of charity; that, without such practices in some shape or form, that passionate love of Christ crucified, which is the distinguishing mark of Christian holiness, can hardly be maintained, unless under circumstances in which persecution or the call to extraordinary labors abundantly supplies the place of self-inflicted pain and privation. But penitential practices are not merely means toward the attainment of divine charity; they are also the fruits of that virtue, and when informed thereby, they are not merely useful as part of a course of spiritual athletics, but are in themselves in the highest degree expiatory and meritorious.†

*Thurston, *loc. cit.*, pp. 98 ff.

†From *Christian Asceticism and Common Sense,* by Rev. Herbert Lucas, S.J., in *The American Ecclesiastical Review,* March, 1901.

CHAPTER XVI.

Was Christ an Ascetic?*

In a charming and commendable work from the pen of a scholarly Catholic priest there is one passage which has given rise to some misgiving. In a meditation on the words, "Let your moderation be known to all men," the clever writer says:

"Our Lord was no ascetic; His great Apostle, Paul, who has best interpreted His spirit to the Western world, was no ascetic, though he chastised his body and brought it into servitude to the reasonableness of the New Law. Asceticism serves a purpose in the Church, and may be said, without exaggeration, to have been baptized by her spirit; yet of itself it is no essential part of the soul of genuine religion, and does not necessarily reveal the lineaments of the truer Christ, who in His earthly career was at once manly and tender above all His saints' imaginings of Him, and who had, moreover, a curiously every-day note about His exterior conduct that rebuked the intolerant austerity of the Pharisees and formalists of the towns, as well as the aloofness of the dwellers in the desert. And yet asceticism has played a large part in the history of the Church, and has, if possible, a graver rôle to fulfil in an age which threatens to be emasculately enamored of the material comforts of existence. But its functions will ever be remedial and transitional. Certain types of temperament will be saved by it as long as the Gospel will be preached."

*For reasons that seemed good to him, the introductory sentences of this article were changed by the Editor.

About seven years ago there appeared in *The Spectator* an article containing a passage remarkably like the one just quoted. It runs thus:

"Asceticism is neither the cause nor the effect of holiness, nor even its proof and sign. . . . *Per se* and in its essentials, Christianity has nothing to do with asceticism. Our Lord was not an ascetic, and showed no special favor to ascetics. Indeed, He may be said by His teaching and example to have put a curb on the tendency of the Hebrews (like all other Asiatics) to overrate asceticism, and to consider those who ran into extravagances of bodily mortification as especially holy. . . . The ascetic is not necessarily a Christian, or the Christian an ascetic; but for all that, the ascetic habit has a good deal to be said for it."

Now, while granting that these statements contain much truth, we are bound to say that we think that both their substance and their tone are apt to suggest what is not truth. In warning us of one danger we fear the writers have incurred the opposite danger. Let us, then, try to discuss the matter intelligently; and even if we do not arrive at certainty, we may help somewhat to clear the atmosphere.

To go to the root-meaning of asceticism: it is ἀσκέω, to practice or to exercise; ἄσκησις, exercise or training; ἀσκητής, an athlete. From time immemorial, and among all classes of people, bodily exercise and discipline have ever been held and felt to be a means of acquiring moral and spiritual perfection. Among various classes of men there have been varying degrees of strictness in this self-discipline, ranging from those who sought nothing more than mere temperance to those who inflicted themselves with extremest austerities. So, too, have

men carried on this discipline from motives of the widest diversity—the saint, the stoic, the athlete, or the fakir. But always the general and primary end in view was to subdue the material to the spiritual.

In the early Church there was a body of fervent Christians known as the Ascetes. According to the apostolic canons they were placed as a class between the clergy and the laity. They did not leave the world, like monks or hermits, but tried to carry on their lives of self-discipline in the world, using as means thereto fasting, prayer, chastity, and castigation of the body. The predominant idea of their exercise and training seems to have been simply the subduing of their lower nature. Here we have the embryo of asceticism. Along with the development of the Christian religion the ascetical idea and practice developed also. The ulterior motive for subduing the lower nature was love of God. When once the line of mere temperance had been passed, the motive of love of God would naturally seek other means to express itself. Thus the motives of expiation of sin and of obtaining favors from God became more and more explicit. But as bodily pain, whether of renunciation or of endurance, had come to be acknowledged as the ordinary means of expressing love for God, it thus became the recognized means not only of subduing the lower nature, but also of atoning for past sin and of supplicating for future needs. This, then, was the development and the scope of Christian ascetics.

We confess at the outset that we know of no intrinsic reason *why* suffering should be a necessary companion of love. We merely state the fact that it is so; and we appeal to the whole of human experience to support the assertion. It may be that the renunciation and endurance necessary for the

due observance of the natural law and the ten Commandments fostered the conviction that pain was the companion of love; it may be that the human soul, since it was naturally Christian from the beginning, sought to anticipate the Christian doctrine of love and suffering; it also may have been part of a divine primitive revelation. Our first parent, indeed, seems to have needed to pass through the fires of violent temptation and renunciation before he could be established in his eternal joy. But whatever may have been the origin of the law, a law it is, and a law which all must recognize. It is the very foundation of asceticism, and once clearly apprehended, it saves us from the Scylla of superstitious pain-worship on the one hand, and the Charybdis of hedonistic indulgence on the other.

We must recognize at once that our present life is complex in the extreme, and cramful of conflicting interests. The Christian doctrine of the effects of original sin asserts and accounts for all this. If one interest must be followed, another must be abandoned; and it is the wrench from the interest which must be abandoned which causes pain. The more interests that have to be cut away, the stronger is the attachment to the interests that remain. The process is one of concentration of will-strength by the destruction of the dissipations of will-strength. Hence the man who has thus exercised himself in a high degree is to be admired, not so much for the amount of suffering he has undergone, but for the amount of will-strength that he has acquired. The essential and *per se* element in the process is the will-power or love put forth; the pain caused by detachment is what we may call an "inseparable accident."

With this important distinction before our minds,

then, it is easy to see how self-inflicted suffering is effectual both in subduing rebellious nature and in obtaining forgiveness of past sins and in pleading for future favors. It is not that Almighty God derives any pleasure at the sight of suffering; that would show Him to be the most cruel of all beings. No; God dislikes and hates the suffering as much as any one, but He allows it because, from the nature of the case, it is necessary for the generation, the strengthening, and the perfection of love. The perverse promptings of lower nature are obstacles to the free exercise of love; sin is the actual withholding of love; the request for future favors is merely asking for more love; therefore it is that Almighty God, while regretting the contingent suffering, allows it for the sake of the love of which it is the condition, the measure, and the expression.

The neglect of this distinction is the source of false asceticism; while much of the unpopularity of true asceticism is traceable to the same cause. But the Church has ever been on her guard lest a perverted system should obtain within her fold. The history of the Flagellants in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries suffices to show us the mind and attitude of the Church with regard to self-inflicted suffering. These misguided zealots in their bodily mortifications were not doing more than the saints had done, but their motives were wrong, and so they brought upon themselves the condemnation of Pope Clement VI.

Asceticism of this kind is nothing else but a superstitious pain-worship. On the part of the sufferer the motive is pride; on the part of the onlooker, morbid curiosity. It was an asceticism something like this which Our Lord rebuked in the intolerant austerity of the Pharisees and formal-

ists of the towns as well as in the aloofness of the dwellers in the desert. It was also an asceticism something like this to which Our Lord showed no special favor, the exaggerated asceticism on which Our Lord may be said by His teaching and example to have put a curb, the overrated asceticism to which the Hebrews (like all other Asiatics) have a tendency, and which considers those who run into extravagances of bodily mortification as especially holy. It was not fasting that Our Lord rebuked, but the perverted motive of fasting. "And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast." Hence, too, when Christ was asked: "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Thy disciples do not fast?" He replied: "Can the children of the marriage fast as long as the Bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the Bridegroom with them, they can not fast. But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast in those days." It would be, perhaps, more true to say that it was a sense of proportion that Our Lord insisted upon rather than a sense of moderation; for occasions might arise in which very extreme mortification would be necessary: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out . . . and if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off."

Indeed, if Our Lord had looked upon suffering as something good, beautiful, or admirable in itself, He would not have exercised His divine power so often in relieving and destroying it. It was always with Him a means subordinated to an end, and in so far as its infliction was good for the perfection of a soul, He counseled it; but also in so far as its removal was good for a soul, He removed it. Thus.

in the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, Our Lord would have compassion on the multitude and would not send them away fasting, lest they should faint by the way. But He made the occasion an opportunity of showing His power over the physical laws of bread, and so prepared the minds of the people for His teaching on the Holy Eucharist. Similarly He healed the man at the pool Probatica, to illustrate His power to give spiritual health and strength. Likewise He healed the man born blind, to manifest His office as the Light of the world.

No. Health or sickness, joy or sorrow, suffering or pleasure may be equally efficient as means of salvation. They are all God's gifts and must be used so far, and only so far, as they are helpful to salvation. This sounds something like the teaching of St. Ignatius, and also, we trust, not unlike the teaching of St. Paul.

When we take up a spiritual book we naturally expect to find theological terms used in their true meaning. Having in view, then, the sense of the word "asceticism" as we have tried to define and explain it, we venture to say that the expression "Our Lord was no ascetic" is decidedly misleading. Our Lord surely was, *par excellence,* the great Ascetic, the Model of all ascetics.

The very reason of His assuming human flesh was to raise human nature from the depths into which it had fallen through Adam's sin. The crucifixion was the great act by which the sins of all time were atoned for. The sacrifice of the cross was the one act by which all divine graces and favors were to be applied to the souls of men. And not only in these final and more prominent acts of His life did Our Lord show Himself to be the great Ascetic, but also

in the daily acts of His life. We are told expressly that He fasted forty days and forty nights. "And He ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended He was hungry." True, we do not read that Our Lord scourged Himself, or wounded Himself, or crucified Himself. But, according to the theology of St. Thomas, Our Lord was at least the indirect cause of all these sufferings, in so far as He could have hindered them and did not do so. Our Lord had the power to frustrate the efforts of His persecutors, first, by rendering them unable or unwilling to kill Him, secondly by rendering His own body impassible. However, as He did not choose to use this power, He is said to be the indirect cause of His own Passion and death. This aspect of His life is especially marked in the fourth Gospel. Our Lord, of His own accord, goes to Gethsemane because He knows that Judas will come there to seek Him. He will not allow St. Peter to do anything to hinder His sufferings: "The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He allows the charges of being a blasphemer and false prophet to fall through, because He wishes to escape death by stoning, in order to obtain the more painful death by crucifixion. Indeed, He expressly claims this office of self-immolation when to Pilate He says: "Thou shouldst not have any power against Me, unless it were given thee from above." And so He carries out His design from the moment when He spontaneously sets forth on the Via Dolorosa to the moment when He deliberately bows His head and gives up the ghost. Surely all this is but asceticism, in the sense we have here set forth. And surely the life of St. Paul, who has best interpreted the spirit of Christ to the Western world, exhibits but the same principles. Indeed, have not the saints of

all ages since Our Lord been merely endeavoring to walk in His footsteps and imitate His Passion? And what is this but the ascetic life? The real difference between the asceticism of those saints who practiced great austerities and that of the ordinary Christian is not one of kind, but of degree. The objects and motives are the same; only the manner and extent are different.

Herein, perhaps, we may recognize the truth which the writer aims at. We are living in an age which is not attracted by the methods of an Antony, a Stylite, or a Benedict Joseph Labré. The life of a pillar-saint excites no emulation in a people possessed of a strong devotion to hygiene and cleanliness. Therefore it is that, while insisting on the motives which give the essence to asceticism, we counsel and practice a modified form of it. *"Quidquid recipitur, recipitur secundum modum recipientis."* What is moderate in one age is excessive in another; and we venture to think that the moderation taught by St. Ignatius in the sixteenth century would scarcely pass as such in the twentieth; for instance, where the saint advises that, in affixing the *catenella* care should be taken that it pierce not to the bone, and in taking the discipline that no bones be broken. The principle, however, of St. Ignatius is the only key to life's problem and must eventually prevail.

A recent writer* has drawn a striking comparison between the saint of Loyola and Count Leo Tolstoi. The two men stand for the two predominant theories of life which are now struggling for the ascendancy. The asceticism of Tolstoi is Buddhistic. His ideal is the extinction of the race.

*Mrs. Craigie (John Oliver Hobbes) in *The Science of Life.*

"He entreats the minister of state, the man of learning, the doctor, the lawyer, the professor, the artist, the clerk—not to think, not to argue, not to analyze, but to dig in the fields. . . . Tolstoi is a disillusioned man. There is disillusion in every line of his masterly novels, and it is disillusion which even the saddest of us can not always accept." His exaggerations may be said to culminate in his views on marriage, the very substance of which he regards as so much unchastity. The asceticism of St. Ignatius is Catholic. His ideal is the perfection of the race. The intelligence and will are to be used, developed to their fullest capacity, and directed to the service of God. Man is to cultivate an indifference so that he wish no more for health than for sickness, for riches than for poverty, for a long life than for a short one. To acquire this indifference, ἄσκησις is absolutely necessary. From the days of John the Baptist until now, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent bear it away." These are the words of Christ. Asceticism certainly has a grave rôle to fulfil in this age, and there is not much danger of its value being over-estimated either in England or America. "Its functions will ever be remedial and transitional." Yes; remedial just in so far as the whole of this life is remedial of sin and sinful inclination; transitional in so far, and only in so far, as this whole miserable life of ours is transitional.*

*Rev. Thomas J. Gerrard, in *American Ecclesiastical Review,* September, 1904.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Duties of a Religious toward God.—A Religious Should Belong Entirely to God.

PLUTARCH tells us that in ancient Rome, when a bride entered the house of her spouse, she spoke these words: "Where Caius is, there is Caia," as if to say: "Where thy will is, O my bridegroom, there is mine." Jesus Christ demands the same of a soul whom He has chosen for His spouse: "Son, give Me thy heart" (Prov. xxiii. 26). My daughter, My spouse, all that I ask of you is your heart, your will. When God created our first parents, He turned His eyes not on their hands, but on their hearts: "He set His eye upon their hearts" (Ecclus. xvii. 7), because exterior works, if they do not spring from the heart, if they are not animated by love, are of no value in His sight. The sanctity of a spouse of Christ consists in the union of her heart with the Heart of God. All her beauty is within.

St. Bernard says that Almighty God wills to be feared as our King, honored as our Father, and loved as our Spouse. Hence, it follows that, from a consecrated virgin, His spouse, He will bear any shortcoming rather than a defect of love, that is, the cherishing of any inclination not for Him. This is what is meant at the profession of the vows when the Bishop gives the blessed veil, saying: "Receive this veil that henceforth you look no more upon creatures, and banish from your heart every inclination and desire that has not God for its object." The human heart can not exist without love. It must love either God or creatures. Detached from

creatures, the soul will love God. The Holy Ghost admonishes us, therefore, to keep our heart free from every inclination not for God: "With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth out from it" (Prov. iv. 23). To become holy, the soul must banish from the heart whatever is not God. She should pray with David: "Create a clean heart in me, O God!" (Ps. l. 12.) Give me a heart that is empty of all inclinations to creatures. "Woe to them that are of a double heart!" (Ecclus. ii. 14) says God in Holy Scripture. In *The Imitation* we are admonished: "Son, if thou placest thy peace in any person, for thy own gratification, thou shalt be unsettled and entangled. In Me the love of thy friend ought to stand, and for Me is he to be loved. How little soever it be, if anything be inordinately loved and regarded, it keepeth thee back from the sovereign good, and corrupteth the soul."

God can not reign perfectly in a heart as long as even a spark of inordinate desire is habitually cherished therein. The least earthly attachment hinders the creature from belonging entirely to the Creator. As long as St. Teresa kept a little disorderly affection in her heart for one of her relatives, she could not belong wholly to God; but after she had renounced every inordinate inclination to creatures, and consecrated her heart solely to God, she became worthy to hear the following words from the Lord: "Teresa, now art thou wholly Mine; now am I wholly thine!" Our one heart and our one soul ought to be given whole and entire to Him who alone deserves all our love, who has done and suffered so much to gain that love. "One to One!" exclaims St. Egidius. God wishes all men to love Him with their whole hearts. His command is addressed to all: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

with thy whole heart" (Matt. xxii. 37). But especially is this command directed to those souls that have chosen the religious life. A Brother once told St. Joseph of the Cross that he had become a Religious in order to save his soul. "No, my son," replied the saint, "you have come to the convent not only to save your soul, but also to become a saint; for it ought to be the aim of a Religious to love God as much as possible." Ah! if the Religious does not love God with her whole heart, if she does not belong entirely to Him, where shall He look for one who has given her whole heart to Him? "This is the generation of them that seek Him, of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob" (Ps. xxiii. 6).

Forget everything else, and think only of keeping your whole heart for that Lord who has chosen you from among so many, and indeed, only that you may love Him. Yes, love Him with your whole heart, for Jesus wills that His spouse should be "a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up" (Cant. iv. 12); a garden whose entrance is closed to all but the heavenly Bridegroom, a sealed fountain, for this Bridegroom is jealous of the love of His bride. He commands her: "Put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death" (Cant. viii. 6). O religious soul, do not divide your heart! Belong entirely to Him who alone deserves an infinite love. Say with the Psalmist: "What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and my portion forever!" (Ps. lxxii. 25, 26.)

A Religious whose aim is to become a saint, and who loves God above all things and with her whole heart, will not be found wanting in fraternal charity; for the Lord Himself has given the command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The saints love God. Nobody doubts that fact, but there is a tendency to exaggerate it and to say that the saints love nobody but God. We read in *The Psychology of the Saints:** "On the day after her clothing, a nun wrote as follows: 'In obedience to the rule of the Novitiate I have dropped all my correspondence. Sacrifices of the heart and universal detachment are what God chiefly requires of us, poor women, who have nothing left on this earth (having relinquished all—country, home, parents, friends).' Having got that far, she pulls herself up and continues without even beginning a fresh sentence: 'Or rather, I ought to say, the whole world is ours; for, according to St. Vincent de Paul, our love embraces the entire world.'

"This young Religious was speaking in the language of the saints. Before St. Vincent de Paul, St. Catharine of Sienna used to say: 'The reason why God's servants love creatures so much is that they see how much Christ loves them, and it is one of the properties of love to love what is loved by the persons we love.' Many other saints, whose lives and actions were more hidden than hers, have said the same thing, that when Christ crucified takes possession of a soul, He inspires it with a very great tenderness for the humanity for which He died. Sanctity demands complete detachment from all pleasures which are derived from self-love. This is a rule which admits of no exception, and it applies to spiritual as well as earthly consolations. According to the great mystics, the end, the chief use of dryness and aridities is to detach the soul, not from spiritual benefits, but from a selfish and sensible love of them. Once self-love is destroyed, the barrier is done away with, and not only is there

**Vide* Henri Joli, *The Psychology of the Saints*, p. 150 ff.

no law of detachment from all things, but the soul is enjoined to love everything, provided that it does so 'for the love of God.'

"I foresee an objection. I shall be told that loving the whole world really means loving no one, and that this universal love is precisely what kills the natural affections. But is it loving no one to do as the saints did when they deprived themselves of food and clothing for the sake of the poor; when they nursed the sick and even kissed their wounds; when they entertained pilgrims and strangers gratuitously; when they founded homes for orphans and children; when they braved the contagion of lepers and the plague-stricken with no other protection than faith and prayer; when they freed captives at the price of their own liberty, and enfranchised slaves; when they defended negroes against the tyranny of their masters, and, like St. Catharine of Sienna, assisted convicts at the hour of death; when they founded refuges for young girls whose poverty exposed them to evil, and opened their arms to the afflicted and to sinners, for whom they felt all Christ's passionate pity and mercy? There is no priest, no apostle worthy of the name, who ought not to be able to cry out at every hour of the day with St. Paul: 'Who is weak and I am not weak, who is scandalized and I am not on fire?' Who suffers in any way, and I do not suffer with him?

"Some people will say: How about the saints, who left their families and the world? I answer that they broke their dearest ties only in order to renew them in a different manner, and that this renewal was voluntary on their part and in obedience to a want of their very nature. St. Catharine of Sienna tells us emphatically that nothing has so great an influence over the heart of man as love, 'for man

was created by love and therefore it is his nature to love. Man was created body and soul by love, for out of love God created him to His own image and likeness, and out of love his parents gave him being.' Most of those who have left father and mother could re-echo these words of St. Teresa: 'I am only telling the truth, for I remember it distinctly, that when I left my father's house I felt pain like that which one feels in one's agony, and I do not believe that death itself can be more painful. I felt as if all my bones were being torn apart.'

"The great Carmelite saint followed the fortunes of her brothers and sisters from the seclusion of her cell, took interest in their lives, and gave them good advice. If faith does not loosen family ties with the ordinary believer who knows that they will be continued in the next world, how could it do so with a saint like Teresa, who lets us into the secrets of her heart when she tells us: 'I was carried up to heaven, and the first persons I saw there were my father and mother.'

"Souls like hers are convinced that not only can 'no one have too much intelligence,' but also that 'no one can have too much heart, and that if only the intention is pure we should love every creature on this earth.'

"The friendships of the saints are no matter for astonishment. Neither is it surprising that 'in the history of most of those saints who have re-formed or founded religious institutions, we find that the love and devotedness of a holy woman exercised a great influence over their lives and work.' St. Paula stands beside St. Jerome, the Countess Matilda beside St. Gregory VII., St. Clare beside St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa beside St. John of the Cross, St. Jane de Chantal beside St. Francis de Sales."

The author of *The Imitation* says: "By two wings is man lifted above earthly things, namely, by simplicity and purity. Simplicity must be in the intention, purity in the affection. Simplicity aimeth at God, purity apprehendeth Him and tasteth Him. No good work will be a hindrance to thee provided thou be free interiorly from all inordinate affection. If thou aim at and seek after nothing else but the will of God and thy neighbor's benefit, then shalt thou enjoy interior liberty. If only thy heart were right, then every created thing would be to thee a mirror of life and a book of holy teaching. There is no creature so little and so vile that it showeth not forth the goodness of God." Simplicity and liberty of spirit are characteristic of the ideal Religious, who loves God above all things and with her whole heart.

These virtues are praised most highly by St. Francis de Sales, as we read in *The Spiritual Director:* "Liberty of spirit consists in keeping the heart totally disengaged from every created thing, that it may follow the known will of God. The soul which has attained this liberty seeks only that the name of God should be sanctified, that His majesty reign in us, and that His will be done. The first mark of this liberty of spirit is not to be attached to any consolation whatever, but, having done our duty, to remain indifferent to everything else. Another mark is, that we do not upon any account lose our joy and content of mind; for the loss of nothing can make him sad who is not fondly addicted to anything. The effects of this liberty of spirit are a great sweetness of temper, a gentle complaisance and condescension to whatever is not sin, and a disposition easily moved to all actions of virtue and charity.

"Simplicity is an act of pure charity which has only one end, which is to acquire in a perfect manner the love of God; and our souls have obtained this simplicity, when we have no other object in all we do but that. It is an act of refined and unmixed charity. It is that *unum necessarium*, that one thing necessary recommended by Our Saviour. Lastly, it is an inseparable companion of charity, since it aims directly at God, and is inconsistent with any mixture of self-interest, for in that case it were rather to be called duplicity, which looks two ways, than simplicity, which confines and rivets its whole view on one only; that is, it so looks to God, that it lends not a glance to any creature.

"Simplicity quite banishes out of the soul that care and solicitude with which many perplex themselves unprofitably, in seeking out a great number of exercises, and (as they call them) means how they may come to love God; and they imagine that unless they do all that the saints have done before them, they can never think they have done enough to obtain it. Poor souls! they torment themselves to find out a kind of art how to come at the love of God, and do not consider that there is no such art —we have merely to love Him; they imagine that there is a kind of mysterious method of gaining this love, when plain and artless simplicity alone does the whole business.

"After a soul endowed with simplicity has done any action which she judges it is her duty to do, she thinks no more of it; and if it slip into her thoughts what others will say or think of her, she endeavors to repress that thought and stop the progress of it, because she can not endure that anything should impede her aim, which is to keep an attentive eye to her God, and to increase the love of Him in

her heart. The consideration of creatures is the least part of her motive, because she reserves all to her Creator. If she see it expedient to do this or that, she sets about it, let what God pleases be the success of it. Having once done her duty, all her care is over; yet, notwithstanding all this, she may perhaps feel some kind of trouble, but let her not fear it, nor regard it. It is only in the inferior part of her soul, nor ought it to shock us as long as we do not deliberately consent to the suggestion."

The Blessed Mother Julie Billiart, foundress of the Institute of the Sisters of Notre Dame, possessed this simplicity and spiritual liberty in a remarkable degree. This liberty of spirit in the blessed servant of God is one of the points to which Mère St. Joseph, in her *Memoirs,* calls special attention: "Our Mother," she writes, "was by nature exceedingly ardent and active, full of life and fire; she suffered, moreover, from an affection of the nerves which generally gives rise to reverie and imaginations; yet she was absolutely free from such influences; her mind was clear, accurate and singularly free. She was never preoccupied, never lost in her thoughts. No matter at what moment you accosted her, you were sure to find her at liberty; the business on hand was always welcomed by her, if it related to God's interests. The lively faith which animated her filled her with sentiments of the deepest respect and veneration for bishops and priests, but the simplicity of her soul never allowed her to give way to bustle or anxiety when she was treating with prelates or the great ones of this world. How often have I seen her on such occasions keeping her mind fixed on God, awaiting the favorable moment, as peaceful under contradiction as though all had gone well with her. And if she were obliged to

offer some explanation, it was easy to see by her limpid and facile language, and by the very expressions she used, that she had but one object in view—the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

As her biographer writes: "Her solid faith and her ardent charity were the basis of her unshaken confidence. Neither the sufferings of a long and cruel infirmity, nor the privations of poverty, nor the unjust treatment of those who ought to have been her friends and protectors, could trouble the peace of her soul, or shake for an instant the trust she had placed in God alone."

We read in *The Imitation:* "Some there are that resign themselves, but it is with some exception; for they do not wholly trust in God and therefore are busy in providing for themselves. Some also at first offer all, but afterwards, being assailed by temptation, they return again to what they had left, and therefore make no progress in virtue. These shall neither attain to the true liberty of a pure heart, nor to the grace of a delightful familiarity with Me, unless they first entirely resign themselves and offer themselves a daily sacrifice to Me, without which union of fruition neither is nor shall subsist. Forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy a great inward peace. Give all for all; seek nothing; call nothing back; stand purely and with a full confidence before Me, and thou shalt possess Me. Thou shalt be free in heart, and the darkness shall not weigh thee down. Aim at this, pray for this, desire this, that thou mayest be divested of all self-seeking; that thou mayest die to thyself, and eternally live to Me.

"O Lord, true glory and holy exultation are to glory in Thee and not in one's self; to rejoice in Thy name, not in one's own strength; to find pleasure

in no creature, save only for Thy sake. Let Thy name be praised, not mine; let Thy work be magnified, not mine. Thou art my glory; Thou art the exultation of my heart. In Thee will I glory and rejoice all the day; but for myself, I will glory in nothing save in my infirmities."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Essence of Perfection.—The Union of all Virtues in Charity.

St. Catharine of Sienna says in her *Dialogue on Consummated Perfection:*

"I saw that many say many things, and speak differently of the virtues by which God is to be worthily served. And yet man's capacity is but small, his understanding dull, his memory weak. So that he can not comprehend many things, or retain those he is able to perceive. And hence, although many set themselves to learn perfection, few are found to reach it."

Truly, when the soul is still young and unformed in spirit—having withal many duties to attend to that divide its attention, yet aspiring to the best things—it is apt to turn with anxious heart to the masters of spiritual life, and would fain know from them in one brief sentence the work it has to do for God. *"Vidi multos multa dicere."* Many authors say many things. Who will give me in one word the essence of perfection? I have not time to read long treatises with the care which they require; yet my mind wants a principle, a light within, by which to see my way, to judge, to order and regulate the works of life.

Sometimes it seems that the will of God will suffice for everything, and that conformity and abandonment thereto will carry me through all duties and difficulties. But grave authors speak of the restoration of the divine image and resemblance in the soul as bringing to man the reformation and perfec-

tion of his nature.* Then there is the principle of conformity to Christ our Lord, as the model of perfection. Again, St. Paul seems to make the work of spiritual life consist in putting off the "old man" and putting on the "new man," by mortifying the life of the flesh, and living according to the Spirit (Eph. iv. 22). St. Augustine's view of Christian virtue is that love is everything, and the other virtues but different forms of the one love. Accordingly he defines virtue as being simply "the order of love."† St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure place our perfection radically and essentially in charity, as being the bond of divine union and the principle of supernatural action.‡ Lallemant considers purity of heart and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as "the two poles of all spirituality, by means of which souls attain to perfection,"§ while Rodriguez places perfection in the ordinary actions of life.¶

Are all of these right together, or are there different plans of perfection? How much should I like to see, as on a target, the one point to aim at and to gain!

Thus might a young soul, high in its aspirations, ardent in its affections, hungering and thirsting for spiritual life, say when it first turns itself in earnest to higher things, and seeks with a kind of avidity

*Albert Mag., *"de adhær. Deo,"* C. 3; Denis Carthus., *"de laude Vitæ Solit.,"* A. 1; Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection,* B. i., P. 3, C. 2 & 3, etc.

†*"Virtus est ordo amoris."*—St. Aug., *"de Civ. Dei,"* L. xv., C. 22. See also St. Aug., *"de Morib. Eccles.,"* L. i., C. 15, and *"de doctrina Christiana,"* L. iii., C. 10.

‡St. Thomas, 2 2, Q. 184, Art. 3, and Quode, *"de Carit.,"* Art. 11, ad. 5. St. Bonav., *"Apol. paup.,"* R. i., C. 3, and *"Centiloq.,"* P. 3, S. 40.

§Lallemant, *Spir. Doctrine,* P. 4, C. 2.

¶Rodriguez, *Christian Perf.,* Vol. i., T. ii., C. 1.

to satisfy its desires, by drawing from the rich and varied stores deposited by the saints and holy writers in the treasury of the Church.

Without doubt there is a central point in spiritual life to be aimed at and to be gained, wherein consists the essence of our perfection. And however much spiritual writers may develop their principles, and draw out the manifold operations of the Christian and religious virtues, unquestionably they point to the same center, and that center is undoubtedly the love of God, or divine charity.* All the great principles tend to this or emanate from it. Virtues either lead to divine love or proceed from it. Charity is the central sun that attracts and quickens them. "What the root is to the tree, what the soul is to the body, what the sun is to the world, all this is charity to the Christian heart," says Lewis of Granada.†

For instance, it must needs be true that all our perfection is found in the divine will. For nothing is good or desirable apart from the will of God; and the will of man must necessarily derive its perfection from union therewith, since "none is good but God alone" (Luke xviii. 19), and we are the recipients of His goodness. But the question at once occurs, Where is the divine will to be found? The answer is, in charity. There can be no doubt of this. The will of God is either expressed in His Commandments or signified by His good pleasure. But in either way it is embraced and perfectly fulfilled by charity alone. For certain it is that charity itself is the greatest and first of all the Commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole

*St. Aelred, *Spec. Caritatis,* L. i., C. 16.
†Lewis de Gran., *"de perf. amor. Dei,"* C. 1.

mind. This is the greatest and the first Commandment" (Matt. xxii. 37). Further, Our Lord declares that the keeping of the Commandments is the result of our love; so that by rightly loving Him we do the divine will, and we deflect from that divine will when we fail in our love. "If any one love Me, he will keep My word. . . . He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words" (John xiv. 23, 24). Hence "all the Law and the Prophets depend upon the law of love" (Matt. xxii. 40); that is, the teaching of the Prophets and the details of the Law are ordained to the love of God and of our neighbor, which is charity; or when this is perfect, they proceed from its principle, and become so many different operations of the one love. And the words of the Master are echoed by the disciple. St. Paul declares charity to be the fulfilment of the Law. "All the Law is fulfilled in one word" (Gal. v. 14). "Love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Rom. xiii. 10); the reason of which is that love is the spring of our actions; and if it is only rightly ordered love it moves us to the observance of every law. Who is more obedient to the law than a loving soul? Its love it is that moves it to obey. So well did St. Augustine understand this that he hesitates not to say, "Love, and do what you will,"* being persuaded that we shall not be moved to act wrongly while our love, which is the spring of action, is right. Moreover, "the end of the Commandment is charity" (1 Tim. i. 5); which tells us that the various declarations of God's will all point to divine charity as their one object.

If we consider the will of God as signified by His good pleasure in the occurrences of daily life, what is it but charity that brings us into prompt, easy,

*"*Dilige, et fac quod vis.*"—St. Aug., Tract 7 in Ep. Joan.

and sweet compliance with this holy will? Who seeks to please the Beloved more than a loving soul? It is the "true lover," as St. Teresa says, who "loves everywhere";* and it is this very love that leads it to seek the divine will, and to embrace it in whatever way it comes. For "love spurs us on to do great things, and makes all that is bitter sweet and savory."† Let us listen again to the teaching of St. Catharine of Sienna. Seeing that many teachers say many things, she humbly asks of God that she may receive some brief instruction in the way of perfection that will embrace in a few words the doctrine of the inspired books and holy writers, and so help her to serve God worthily, and thus attain to eternal happiness. The divine Teacher then addresses her: "Know that the salvation and perfection of My servants stand in this one thing, that they do My will alone, ever striving to fulfil it in all things; that they attend to Me, and serve Me every moment of their lives. The more diligently they apply themselves to this, the nearer they approach perfection, since thus they are in union with Perfection itself."‡

She then ardently desires to do the divine will; but knows not clearly in what things it may be found, and therefore beseeches that she may be informed of this also; in answer to which it is said to her: "If thou seekest to know My will, that thou mayest perfectly fulfil it, behold in one word that which it is: that thou shouldst love Me to the utmost of thy power without ceasing; that thou shouldst love Me with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy strength. On the fulfilment of this precept thy per-

*St. Teresa, *Foundat.*, C. 5.
†*The Imitation*, B. iii., C. 5.
‡St. Cath. Sien., *Dial. on Consum. Perfection.*

fection depends; and therefore it is written that 'the end of the Commandment is charity,' and 'love is the fulfilling of the Law.' "*

Understanding from this that the divine will and her own perfection are to be found in the perfect love of God, she desires, in the ardor of her soul, to give herself to this perfect love. She is then instructed in the means of attaining to the perfection of charity, by entire mortification, purity of heart, and total abandonment to God. Enlightened by this heavenly doctrine, she acknowledges that which is the practical point in spiritual science, namely, "By how much the more a man dies to himself, by so much more he lives to God."† This is the "game of love."‡

If, again, we place perfection—as we must—in conformity to Jesus Christ our Lord, as the model of perfection, we are at once led to inquire by what means we are to attain to this conformity. When Our Lord says, "Learn of Me," "He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness," the question immediately arises, How are we to follow Christ? The answer is, that Our Lord's way is the way of perfect love. He is the divine Lover of God and of men. For the love of God and of men He became incarnate, lived on earth, taught the law of love and the life of love, suffered for love, and died for love; sent down the Spirit of His love upon the Church, to be the ruling power of our lives and actions, by "the charity of God poured forth in our hearts" (Rom. v. 5), and left us the marvelous gift of Himself to the end of the world, in the mystery of love on the altar, wherein He dwells as the divine Lover

*St. Cath. Sien., *Dial. on Consum. Perfection.*
†*Ibid.*
‡Suso, *Etern. Wisd.*, C. 9.

in the midst of those He loves—working with us, nourishing and perfecting His life of love in the souls of men. When, therefore, Our Lord says, "Follow Me," it is not with the steps of the body, but with the love of the soul, that He desires to be followed, as St. Ambrose tells us.* As St. Paul had also said, "Be ye followers of God, and walk in love, as most dear children" (Eph. v. 2). Truly, Our Lord, in His sacred humanity, is the perfect model of perfect love: whether we consider Him in His joyful, sorrowful, or glorious mysteries, perfect charity reigns throughout all. The faculties of His human soul ever maintain themselves by the power of the love that governs them, in subjection to the Divinity; so that in all their operations the love of God is their ruling principle. This, indeed, is the life of charity—for God's will and love to govern the human will and love, His light to illumine the intelligence, His remembrance to fill the memory, and then for the operations of the entire man to proceed under the influence and guidance of the Divine Spirit: so that thus the creature becomes the recipient of God's life, light, love, and movement, and is made a sharer in His blessedness, and a fit instrument in His hands for the good of others. Happy the life which is thus pervaded in all its parts by the Spirit of God. "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14). Thus it is by charity that we follow Our Lord in the way of perfection. "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John xvii. 23). "If you speak to Christ," says St. Catharine of Sienna, writing of a good Religious, "and say, 'Who is this soul?' He

*"*Sequi jubet, non corporis gressu, sed mentis affectu.*" St. Amb., *in Lucam*, C. 5, v. 27.

will answer, 'It is another Myself, made so by perfect love.' "*

If, again, we take perfection as shown forth by a full and faithful exercise of the Christian virtues and counsels, so that the life of a man is seen to be justly balanced, rightly ordered, and adorned with Christ-like virtues, each in its proper time and place, we are obliged to own that the supernatural beauty of such a life is the effect and consequence of a vivifying charity within the soul. Charity is to be reckoned as the motive-cause of all such virtues, in so far as they are worthy of God and heaven. As St. Thomas says, "Charity, aiming at the ultimate end as its object, moves the other virtues to action. For the virtue which regards the ultimate end always commands the virtues which have regard to the means. And therefore the merit of eternal life first belongs to charity, then to the other virtues, according as their acts are prompted by charity. Hence charity is the principle of all good works referred to the last end."

It is true, indeed, that the natural virtues may exist apart from charity, at least in an imperfect degree; but we are considering ourselves now in the supernatural order of the Christian life, incorporated with Christ, participating, therefore, in His Spirit, and living in reference to our ultimate end. As such, charity becomes "soul of our soul," "life of our life," and consequently the principle and form of the soul's virtues, when we are true, that is, to the supernatural principle; for the natural principle still lives, and often hinders the force of charity by moving *præter finem*. But if, as true Christians, we move by the Spirit of Christ (Gal. v.) "*in ordine ad finem*," charity hereby becomes our moving-prin-

*St. Cath. Sien. *Letter*, 129.

ciple, the life and soul of our actions. The reason of this is that God is our ultimate end; and the love of Him as such moves us to acts of virtue, as means by which we may advance to Him. This love is charity. "By charity," says St. Thomas, "the acts of all other virtues are ordered to their last end; in virtue of which charity becomes the form of the other virtues, extending itself as the ruling power to all the actions of human life."

It would seem, however, that, ordinarily speaking, years of faithful practice of the moral virtues as opportunities occur would be required before charity holds them as with reins in her hand, governing thereby the whole man, and moving him to action promptly, easily, and sweetly. And therefore the majority of those who exhibit in a fair measure the Christian virtues in daily life would perhaps rather be tending, by the practice of these virtues, toward the perfection of charity than enjoying their exercise as the results of such charity, in calm and sweet possession of the soul. This agrees with the teaching of the Abbot Moses to Cassian: "Fasting, watching, meditation, privation, are not themselves perfection, but the instruments by which we may acquire perfection. They are not the object of our profession, but the means by which we may obtain it. It becomes us, therefore, to use these means with reference to our end, which is charity. What will it avail us to perform with punctuality our ordinary exercises if the main purpose for which we perform them is eluded? To this end, therefore, should be referred our solitude, our fasts, our daily employments—yea, every penitential exercise, and every virtue, that by these means our hearts may be preserved in calm, and thus we may ascend to the perfection of charity."

St. Thomas also points to this in his teaching on the active and contemplative life; taking now with St. Gregory the contemplative life for the loving adherence of the soul to God by charity, and the active life for the exercise of the moral virtues.* The Angelic Doctor says: "The active life is a preparation to the contemplative; and therefore until one has attained to perfection in active life he can not reach to the contemplative, except in its commencement, and imperfectly. For as long as a man has difficulty in practicing the moral virtues, his attention is anxiously engaged with them, which hinders his devotedness to contemplation. But when his active life is perfect, then, having the moral virtues in command, he is able without impediment to give himself to contemplation. And in proportion to his perfection in active life he is able to unite both action and contemplation together."† "In this way we proceed from the active life to the contemplative; and from the contemplative life we return to the active, that action may be directed by contemplation."‡ Hence St. Gregory says that "he who desires to gain the citadel of contemplation must first prove himself in the field of action."§

From this we see that charity, while yet imperfect, moves us to the exercise of the Christian virtues, in order to gain her own perfection; and when she has attained to the repose of contemplative love, she returns to the domain of activity in calm and sweet possession of the soul, to animate, direct, sustain, and govern the occupations of the active life. Thus she brings to man both his essential

*St. Thom., 2 2, Q. 181, Art. 1.
†*Ibid.*, 3 Sen., D. 35, Art. 3, q. 3.
‡*Ibid.*, 2 2, Q. 182, Art. 4 ad 2.
§St. Greg., *Moral.*, Lib. vi., C. 17.

and accidental perfection, and the beginning of his future beatitude in heaven. "Godliness is profitable to all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8). Happy is the soul which thus attains to the habitual union of its powers in God! "They now unite to produce one harmonious sound," says St. Catharine of Sienna, "like the chords of a musical instrument. The powers of the soul are the great chords, the senses of the body the smaller ones. And when all these are used to the praise of God, and in the service of our neighbor, they produce one sound, like that of a harmonious organ. All the saints have touched this organ, and drawn forth musical tones. The first who sounded it was the sweet and loving Word, whose humanity, united to His Divinity, made sweet music on the wood of the cross, and all His servants have learned of Him, as of their Master, to give forth similar music, some in one way and some in another, divine Providence giving all the instruments on which to play."*

What, now, shall we say to Rodriguez when he places our perfection in the ordinary actions of life? It is clear when he says this that he speaks of the *material* of our perfection, and that he presupposes charity in our actions as their *form* or animating spirit. "All our actions," says he, "be nothing else but the effects of the divine love that animates us. And as in the Temple of Solomon there was nothing but what was of gold, or covered with gold, so let there be nothing in you which is not either an act or an effect of the love of God."†

Further, as already said, charity as a habit, being our animating principle, has for the gaining of its

*St. Cath. Sien., *Dial.*, C. 147.
†Rodriguez, *Christian Perf.*, Vol. i., T. iii., C. 8.

own perfection to put itself forth to action; and if it act not, it is not true charity. The perfection of virtue is not its habit, but its act.* The habit is ordained to its act, as the sword to its use. A man is virtuous not because he *can* act virtuously, but because he *does* so. And the habit of virtue, to insure its perfection, must produce its acts as readily and perfectly as possible. Rightly, therefore, does Rodriguez make perfection reside in our ordinary actions, as the form resides in the matter, the soul in the body, and the kernel in the shell. But the essential constituent of perfection ever remains in the inherent habit of habits, disposed to its acts, *viz.,* charity uniting with God, and proceeding to action from its principle of love. This is the assimilation of the creature to the Creator, apart from which there can be no perfection. The ordinary works of life are thus the divinely appointed means and ways by which and in which the habit of love energizes and reduces itself to act, thus exercising and expanding its life and power, intensively and extensively, and so enabling the soul by repeated acts to develop the habit of love, by means of which it advances to and finally attains its perfection.

Although, therefore, perfection is to be found in our ordinary actions, they depend for this perfection on the charity that animates them; and without this it is certain that they are worthless, so far as supernatural worth and merit are concerned. Who teaches this more emphatically than the inspired Apostle? "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge; and if I should have all

*St. Thom., 1 2, Q. 3, Art. 2.

faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 1). Here we see that not only ordinary actions, but those the most exalted, reckon for nothing apart from charity, that is, in supernatural worth and merit; which is not difficult to understand, for an action without *love* is a body without a soul. Hence St. Augustine said that "where there is no love, no good work is imputed, nor is a work rightly called good";* as on the other hand he says, "Love, and do what you will; keep to the root of love; from this nought but good springs forth."† St. Gregory also tells us that it is not the outer substance of our actions that God regards, but the inner love that animates them. "God regards the heart rather than the external work. Nor does He consider how much a man does, but with how much love he does it."‡ *The Imitation* says the same, in the self-same words.§

St. Thomas enters carefully into the consideration of this point, and teaches that the merit of our outward actions wholly depends on the charity they contain; speaking always of supernatural merit, in reference to the rewards of heaven.¶ It is the

*St. Aug., *de Gratia Christi*, C. 26.
†St. Aug., Tract 7 in Epist. Joan.
‡St. Greg., Hom. 5 in Evang.
§*The Imitation*, B. i., C. 15.
¶*"Radix merendi est Caritas."*—St. Thom., 2 2, Q. 182, Art. 2. The influx of charity into our actions varies indefinitely in degree, according as the habit of charity is more or less developed and disposed to its acts. In general the influx may be actual or virtual. Actual, when we are directly prompted by divine love, as our principle and our end; virtual, when charity's virtue continues in our actions from

inward spirit which is the test and measure of merit in the outward act. So that the active or the contemplative life respectively will be the more meritorious according to the degree of charity either may contain. A small action done with great charity is more meritorious than a great action done with small charity; and the degrees of glory in heaven will be according to the degrees of charity on earth.

Therefore if a man's life and actions are to be accounted *truly* great, and worthy of God and heaven, whatever their outward appearance may be, they must proceed from a heart animated by the principle of divine charity.* The love of God is to be the soul of our actions. As the soul moves the body, so divine charity is to move the soul. Is it not the inward love of the heart that God requires before all things? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength." And even in His servants of the Old Law, was it not the "perfect heart" that He looked for? Thus we read that King Amasias "did what was good in the sight of the Lord, yet not with a perfect heart" (2 Paralip. xxv. 2). And again: "Solomon's heart was not perfect with the Lord" (3 Kings xi. 4). But "the heart of Asa was perfect with the Lord all his days" (3 Kings xv. 14). Let us not imagine, then, that God will

the force of its previous act, and practically influences them from its habitual power in the mind and heart. Then, although not adverted to, charity enters into our actions by a virtual inflow, and is therefore still our principle and our end. So it remains until revoked by some subsequent act incompatible with it, such as a venial sin, which substitutes a natural principle and end for charity; which principle is cupidity, or self-love, the antagonistic principle to charity in the soul.

*St. Thom., 3 Sent., D. 29. Q. 1, A. 2.

be satisfied with any amount of customable external service, if we withhold that which He desires more than all. "My son, give Me thy heart" (Prov. xxiii. 26). How could it be otherwise? Why should God be expected to reward actions which are not done for Him—which flow from a simply human principle? For natural actions there are natural rewards. But if we aim at supernatural rewards, then our principle of action must be in proportion thereto.* This supernatural principle we have in charity, as giving us a participation of God's own holy spirit and love. And as we act by it, it communicates its divine virtue to our actions. Thus God enters into them, and makes them good, and worthy of Himself; since He is the only Good, and we are the recipients of His goodness.

If, then, we live in charity, let us see that we act by it. "Without actual exercise all virtue vanishes, and only a self-pleasing conceit remains." † "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 25).‡ Let us learn to separate the precious from the vile. If the higher principle of divine love has been planted within us, how can we turn from it to follow instead the biddings of natural and fleshly love? We ought to beware of withdrawing ourselves from the action of God and betaking ourselves to independent movements of our own. For "every plant which My Father hath not planted shall be rooted up" (Matt. xv. 13). We ought to fear lest, having received so great a power, we neglect to use it; remembering Our Lord's impressive teaching and warning in the parable of the talents, and the condemnation of the servant who neglected

*St. Thom., 3 Sent., D. 18, Art. 2.
†Balduke, *Kingdom of God within the Soul.*—Præf.
‡St. Thom., in Pauli Epist. ad Galat. 5.

to turn his talent to account. "Lord, Thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained other five" (Matt. xxv. 20). Grace must gain more grace; light more light; love must advance to higher love; strength get greater strength; and progress serve to further progress. Everything must move according to its nature. Every power must put forth its proper operation: the mind by thinking, the eye by seeing, the hand by working, the foot by walking. See in like manner the vast power of charity: the power of loving God and doing great things for Him; the power of governing our souls, our lives, our actions, according to Him. Do we use this power of love as rightly and readily as our inferior powers? Does it operate? Does it put forth its acts, governing us, leading us on, and moving us according to God? "What more could I do to My vineyard that I have not done to it?" After all that Our Lord has done to give us His love; after planting us in His choice vineyard of Religion: tending, training, nourishing, cultivating our souls, so fitting them to yield to Him sweetly and abundantly the fruits of pure charity—are we to be found now bringing forth the "wild grapes" of our own "fleshly loves and fears"?

The power of charity is for the act of charity, since every power is for its proper act.* "A good man, out of a good treasure, bringeth forth good things" (Matt. xii. 35). Ought we not, then, from the divine treasure of charity to bring forth divine things, *viz.*, charity's own proper, full, and perfect acts? Thus perfection resides in the ordinary actions of life, in so far as they are animated, prompted, and regulated by the principle of charity. And when in due time, by great fidelity to the lights and

*St. Thom., 1 2. Q. 49, Art. 3.

movements of the Holy Spirit, charity has attained her full sway within the soul, and moves the faculties and bodily powers to act promptly, easily, and sweetly, then is brought about that happy harmony within, whereby the natural man is subdued to the spiritual, and the spirit is subdued to God, and we live and act no longer according to man, but according to God. Then shine forth the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the soul wherein the divine image is now restored. It has given "all for all;" and God delights to manifest again the life of Christ in mortal flesh.

Thus writes the illustrious and erudite Dominican, Father Reginald Buckler, in his luminous treatise on *The Perfection of Man by Charity.**

On this same subject Basso says: "Since God loves us so intensely, He wills that we should love Him in return with our whole heart, with all our love." "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee but that thou love Him and serve Him with thy whole heart?" says Moses (Deut. x. 12). He promises to be Himself our reward if we love Him: "I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great" (Gen. xv. 1). The princes of this world reward their faithful servants with honors and estates; but Our God bestows on them that love Him nothing less than Himself. If we had no other reward to expect, would it not be enough for us to know that we shall be loved by God in return for the love that we give Him? We are assured in many passages of Holy Scripture that God loves those that love Him: "I love them that love Me" (Prov. viii. 17). Again, "He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God

*By special permission of Father Reginald Buckler, this chapter on "Charity: The Essence of Perfection," has been inserted here.

in him" (1 John iv. 16). And again Our Lord promises: "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him" (John xiv. 21).

Our whole perfection consists in the love of God, for love is that virtue which unites us to God. As St. Augustine says: "Love is the bond that unites to God." All other virtues avail nothing if not accompanied by love. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Rom. xiii. 10). St. Augustine is safe, therefore, in saying: "Love, and then do what you will." We must observe that perfect love consists in loving God for Himself. The love that is given to God because of the happiness that is in store for us on account of it is a selfish love. It is not love, properly speaking; rather does it belong to the virtue of hope. But the love of God for God Himself, because He is the everlasting Good, is the love of benevolence, and that is the true love of God. A story is told in the lives of the Fathers of two brothers who lived as hermits in the desert. The evil spirit inspired one of them with the thought that his brother was condemned by God. The simple man believed it, and he was so distressed that the other asked him the cause of his trouble. On hearing it, the humble brother replied: "God be praised, if such be His holy will! But I shall, notwithstanding, love Him as tenderly as I can in this life, for I do not love Him through fear of hell or hope of heaven, but purely because He deserves to be loved above all things." Not long after an angel appeared to the deluded hermit, and told him that his brother was, indeed, among the number of the elect.

We, too, must love God for Himself, and because He deserves our love. If we recall the tokens of His great love for us, we must, at least, love Him out of gratitude. "I have," says He to every one

of us, "loved thee from all eternity, and out of love have I created thee." "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jerem. xxxi. 3). With an everlasting love! A love as old as God Himself! And through love for us He has created so many beautiful things, the heavens with all their glories by day and by night, the mountains and seas in their sublimity, hill and dale, forest and field, fruits and flowers, and all the beauties of the vegetable kingdom. But all these magnificent gifts could not exhaust His love and kindness—He must needs give us Himself! St. Paul says: "He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God" (Eph. v. 2). The chance to make that offering of Himself for us was afforded Him by the ruin into which sin had hurled us. It had robbed us of divine grace, excluded us from heaven, and made us slaves of hell. Almighty God could have freed us from these evils in a very different manner. But such was His love that only by coming on earth Himself, by taking the form of man, by suffering and death, could it be satisfied. It was that love which urged Him to free us from eternal death, to restore us to the friendship of God, and to the heaven that sin had lost. "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (Phil. ii. 7). Infinitely great must have been the love that led a God to clothe Himself with our flesh! "And the Word was made flesh" (John i. 14).

Still greater must be our amazement when we consider what the Son of God has done and suffered for us, miserable worms of the earth. He would not only redeem us, but, by magnificent proofs of His love, He would strive to win our love in return. For this He chose to lead a poor and despised life, to

die a bitter and shameful death. "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8).

Recall the special graces, denied to many others, that have been imparted to you by His loving providence. To you He gave the grace to be born in the bosom of the true Church. He has chosen you for His bride, thus withdrawing you from the dangers to salvation to which so many others remain exposed. And now that you are in the blessed asylum of holy Religion, does He forget you, does He neglect you? Ah, no! How kindly, how generously He provides for you! He is constantly encouraging and strengthening you by His interior lights and inspirations, by the sacraments, the counsels and admonitions of Superiors, the good and edifying example of your fellow-Religious, and by many other means of salvation. Hesitate no longer to sacrifice yourself completely, but say with all your heart: "Thee alone will I love, my God and my all! Do Thou assist me, and in Thy mercy grant that I may love Thee perfectly!" A good watchword is that of St. Francis of Assisi: *"Deus meus et omnia!"* "My God and my all!"

CHAPTER XIX.

The Love of a Religious for Jesus Christ.

We read in the Franciscan chronicles that the saintly Brother Egidius once said to St. Bonaventure, General of the Order: "To you, wise and learned ones, God has granted many graces with which you can serve and glorify Him. But what can we, ignorant and unlettered, do to please the Lord?" St. Bonaventure answered: "Had Our Lord given you no other grace than to be able to love Him, that would be sufficient. By love we can render Him far greater service than by all other gifts." Then Brother Egidius asked, "Can an ignorant man love Our Lord Jesus as much as a learned one?" The saint answered: "A poor, simple, old woman may love Our Lord far more devotedly than a master of theology." Inflamed with holy zeal, Brother Egidius ran to that part of the garden which lay nearest the city and cried in a loud voice: "Come, poor, ignorant, simple one! Love your Lord Jesus Christ, and you may attain to a higher degree of sanctity and happiness than Brother Bonaventure with all his learning!" Then suddenly falling into ecstasy, he did not stir from that spot for three hours.

The Religious above all others must hearken to this call of Brother Egidius to love the Lord. God desires to be especially loved by those whom He has chosen for His spouses and whom He has favored with so many graces and privileges. The *first* means to acquire the love of Jesus Christ is to desire most fervently that your heart may belong

to Him alone. Desires are the wings by which the saints mount to perfect union with God in holy love. St. Teresa left to her daughters several beautiful instructions on this subject. "Our thoughts ought to be great and magnanimous, for on them depends our spiritual advancement." Again she says: "Our desires must not fly low. We must place all our confidence in God. If we use force with ourselves, we shall gradually reach the point to which the saints attained." She tells us, from her own experience, that she had never seen a timid soul advance as far in many years as a magnanimous one in a few days, for Almighty God, as she says, is as much pleased with our desires as with their fulfilment. St. Gregory says that the soul that longs for God with her whole heart already possesses Him. A whole heart means a heart that is emptied of all earthly things, of all earthly love.

The *second* means to acquire the perfect love of God is to renounce all love that has not God for its object. God wishes the sole ownership of our heart —He can not brook a rival. St. Augustine relates that the Roman Senate, after recognizing three thousand gods, refused adoration to the God of the Christians; for, as they said: "He is a proud God, who alone wants to be adored, and who suffers no god but Himself." Our God has a right to demand our whole heart. He is the only true God. He is Our Lord, Our Creator, who has loved us from eternity, and desires our perfect happiness. To love God with our whole heart we must banish from our heart every inclination that has not God for its object. St. Francis de Sales, so inflamed with the love of God, says: "If I knew that in my heart there was a single fiber not for God, I would immediately pluck it out." The love of God can find no entrance

into a heart trammeled by earthly desires. But, on the contrary, in a heart perfectly free from worldly influences the fire of divine love constantly burns more brightly. St. Teresa exclaims: "Tear your heart from all creatures, seek God and you will find Him." Remember, beloved soul, that you espoused yourself to Jesus Christ at your holy profession. You then said: "The kingdom of this world and all temporal treasures I despise for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ, whom I recognize as the most lovable and adorable of bridegrooms. I have, therefore, given Him all my love; in Him I have placed all my hope; in Him I believe, and Him I love above all things." If creatures try to enter your heart, drive them back with the words: "It belongs to Jesus. There is no room for you." Divine love makes of the cloister a place diametrically opposed to the world. In it we hate what the world loves, and love what it hates. To love Jesus above all things and with our whole heart we must deny ourselves; that is, we must willingly accept all that is contrary to self-love, and mortify it in all its demands. Once when St. Teresa was sick they offered her some nourishment, or rather some delicacy, which the saint did not wish to accept. To persuade her to eat of it the nurse assured her that it was very good and well prepared. The saint replied: "Just because it is good I will not eat it." And so we too must resign what pleases us just because it does please us. We must break off all earthly attachments and desires, convinced that no one on earth is more content than he who despises earthly goods and pleasures and longs only for God. In this spirit of renunciation be mindful, beloved soul, to renew every day the vows of *poverty, chastity,* and *obedience.* These three vows remove the

impediments to perfect charity and union with God, which arise (1) from affection to external things; (2) from carnal pleasures and creature loves; and (3) from the love of our own self-will.

To know God means to love Him. To know ourselves means to despise ourselves. Whatever is good in us belongs to God, but nothingness, misery, and sin belong to ourselves. Charity rests on humility. Humility of mind leads to humility of heart, which, as Father Buckler says, "Moves us ever to be humble before God, being well content with our littleness and nothingness, that He may be our all; and which further moves us to be humble before others, when the right occasions come. Then it is, when we are humbled, that we have to act upon our humility of mind, and humble what is of ourself in us, to what is of God in the other. This twofold knowledge—the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves—helps gradually to breed and form within us the two blessed habits of humility and charity, humility forming the safe foundation for charity; humility the groundwork and charity the lifelong work."

To love God, then, means to be truly humble, to love prayer and mortification, to be faithful to the vows and the Rules, to be exact, *i. e.*, very conscientious in the performance of every duty. If you love God truly, prove your love by your actions. Let your watchword be, "All for Jesus!"

The *third* means to obtain the perfect love of Jesus Christ is frequent meditation on His sacred Passion. St. Magdalene of Pazzi says: "A Religious who has consecrated herself entirely to the love of her crucified Saviour ought in every action to glance at the cross, that the thought of the everlasting love which He has borne her may never be absent from

her mind." It seems that our divine Saviour willed to endure so many different kinds of suffering and outrages—chains and blows, scourging and thorns, spitting, reviling, and the crucifixion—in order that His beloved ones should have various mysteries for their meditation. In pondering upon the Passion of Our Lord we should not seek spiritual consolation and sweetness, but only a more ardent love for Jesus. The fruit of such meditations should be the resolution to suffer everything for love of Him who suffered so many and so bitter things for love of us.

The *fourth* means to obtain the perfect love of God consists in frequent acts of that virtue. As fire is fed by fuel, so is love by acts of love. By day and by night, express your love for your crucified Saviour by fervent aspirations like these: "I give myself entirely to Thee, my God! I will all that Thou dost will. Do with me what Thou pleasest. I desire nothing but Thee!" "My God, I love Thee!" "My love, my All!" Yes, a loving sigh, an elevation of the heart, an aspiration with a glance toward heaven, on the Blessed Sacrament, or on a crucifix, ascends as an odor of sweet incense to the throne of God. These loving acts are, perhaps, the very best because more easily made. They can be more frequently renewed, and they are generally pronounced with greater fervor. One of your favorite aspirations should be: "Heart of Jesus, inflamed with love of us, inflame our hearts with love of Thee." Make frequent use also of the following antiphon, with its versicle and response from the *Little Office of the Sacred Heart:*

Antiphon. O Sacred Heart of Jesus, full of loving kindness for those who love Thee, may our flesh and our heart be absorbed in Thee, that Thou

mayest be the love of our heart and our portion forever.

V. My heart is ready, O God of my heart, to do Thy will.

R. My God, I have willed it, that Thy law be ever in the midst of my heart.

O Religious soul! love your divine Spouse not only in word and in sentiment, but in deed and in truth.

CHAPTER XX.

Conformity with the Divine Will.—Abandonment.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM holds that the perfect love of man for God consists in conformity with the divine will. The Wise Man says: "They that are faithful in love shall rest in Him" (Wisd. iii. 9). Souls that love God truly rest in Him; they desire all that He wills. The sacrifice of self-will is the most agreeable offering that can be made to God, since nothing is dearer and sweeter than one's own will. Blessed Henry Suso says: "That you are inundated with spiritual light and consolation does not honor God so much as your submission to His divine will."

The heinousness of sin consists in willing what God does not will. Samuel told Saul that it was a species of idolatry for a man to resist the will of God, because in that case he adores his own instead of the divine will. As the wickedness of the creature lies in his opposition to his Creator, so his perfection consists in conformity with His will. He who tries to conform to the will of God is a man according to the Heart of God, as He Himself says: "I have found a man according to My own Heart, who does all My will." He says the same of a soul who abandons herself to His will: "Thou shalt be called *My pleasure in her*" (Isaias lxii. 4). Happy she who with the bride in the Canticles can say: "My soul melted when my Beloved spoke" (Cant. v. 6). Why does she say *melted?* Because melted things no longer retain their former shape. They take the form of the vessel into which they have been poured. So loving souls no longer preserve their own will, but resign themselves to whatever their Beloved

wills. All that they do for the good pleasure of God is an evidence of their perfect submission to His holy will, quite unlike those who oppose their own obstinate will to His. An instrument is good only when it serves the workman. Of what other use is it? If, for example, the brush would resist the hand of the artist, of what good would it be to him? Would he not cast it away?

When all things go according to their will, men resign themselves to the divine will, but in contradictions they rebel. This is folly. To act in this manner is to suffer doubly and without merit, because the will of God, whether we like it or not, must be accomplished. God takes His delight in those who, in the time of trouble, say with David: "I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because Thou hast done it" (Ps. xxxviii. 10). Many things appear to us evil, and we call them misfortunes; but if we knew God's designs in them we should see clearly that they are blessings in disguise. Manasses, deprived of his kingdom and led into captivity by the Assyrians, certainly regarded it as a great misfortune; and yet it was for him the greatest advantage, for he turned to his God and did penance: "And after that he was in distress, he prayed to the Lord his God, and did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers" (2 Paralip. xxxiii. 12).

No one is more solicitous for our well-being for time and eternity than the great, good God. To make us understand this truth, He compares Himself to a shepherd seeking the lost lamb in the desert, and again to a mother, who can never forget her child: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee" (Isaias xlix. 15). Again, He compares Himself to a hen

which shelters her young under her wings: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not!" (Matt. xxiii. 37.) God encompasses us, as David says, in order to turn away from us every danger on the part of our enemies: "O Lord, Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of Thy good will" (Ps. v. 13). Ah! why do we not abandon ourselves entirely to the guidance of so good a father? Happy are they who allow themselves to be led by Almighty God as He wills and where He wills! Father Saint-Jure tells us of a young man who greatly desired to enter the Society of Jesus. But owing to the fact that he had lost an eye he was rejected. Who would not look upon this as a grievous misfortune for that young man? And yet it was the cause of his supreme happiness, for he was at last received into the Society on condition that he would preach the Gospel in India. He went to that heathen country, and there died a martyr for the Faith. Like the blind man in the Gospel, let us allow ourselves to be led by God, being firmly convinced that only in this manner can we attain eternal salvation. Everything comes from God: "Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God" (Ecclus. xi. 14). God permits the actions directed against you by your persecutors, though He does not will the sin that accompanies them. But of you He expects patience in suffering and persecution; for it is He who sends these trials. When Job was robbed of all his herds God did not will the sin of theft, but He did will that Job should bear his loss patiently. He did so, as we are told by his own words in Holy Scripture: "The Lord gave,

and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!" (Job. i. 21.) St. Augustine, commenting on this passage, says: "Job did not say, 'The Lord gave, and the devil hath taken away.' No, he said, 'The Lord hath taken away.'" In like manner God did not will the sin of the Jews when they crucified the Saviour. And did not Jesus Christ say to Peter: "The chalice which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John xviii. 11.) By these words Christ gives us to understand that although the Jews would indeed kill Him, yet it was His heavenly Father who had prepared that chalice for Him. In every contradiction we should behold the hand of God, and submit to His holy will.

St. Teresa says: "We deceive ourselves greatly if we think that union with God consists in ecstasies, ravishments, and spiritual consolations. It consists alone in thinking, saying, doing that which is in conformity to the will of God. This union is perfect when our will is detached from everything, attached but to God in such a manner that it breathes but His pure will. This is the true and essential union that I ardently desire, and continually ask of Our Lord."

St. Francis de Sales never ceased to admire in St. John the Baptist his perfect conformity to the will of God. "The holy precursor," said he, "dwelt twenty-four years in the desert, and God alone knew the great love he had for the Saviour from the time he was sanctified in his mother's womb, and the longing he had to enjoy His presence; nevertheless, he remained so devoted to his work, doing the will of God, that he quitted it but once to see Him. Having baptized Him, he did not remain among His followers, but continued to exercise the ministry confided to him. O God, what is this, if it be not to hold one's spirit detached from all, and attached to

the will of God alone! This example delights me, overwhelms me with its grandeur."*

The wife of St. Francis Borgia, who was very dear to him, being dangerously ill, Our Saviour gave the saint the choice of her life or death. He replied, "Lord, why leave to me a choice which is in Thy power alone? That which I desire most is to do in all things Thy will; Thou alone knowest what is best for me. Do, then, as pleases Thee best, not only with my wife, but with my children and myself. *Fiat voluntas Tua.*"

St. Vincent de Paul tells us: "One act of resignation to the divine will in that which is contrary to our inclination is of more value than ten thousand words of thanks for that which conforms to our taste." St. Vincent showed by the sweetness of his words and the serenity of his countenance that he looked upon all the events of life with equal indifference. He never lost sight of his great maxim, "Nothing happens in the world but by the order of divine Providence." Into the arms of Providence he threw himself and abandoned himself entirely. A worthy prelate, who was struck with admiration at his constant sweetness, which nothing could disturb, said, "Father Vincent is always Father Vincent."

The saint, learning that a suit was about to be commenced to deprive several houses of his Congregation of some land, replied to those who spoke of it: "Whatever is pleasing to God will take place; He is Master of all we possess; may He dispose of it as He wills."

The prayer of St. Gertrude to God must have been agreeable to Him. She said with greatest fervor: "Lord, I beg Thee have no regard for my will, but

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only for Thine. Do with me what Thou knowest will tend most to Thy glory and to my good. I have no other desire but to be and to do what Thou wilt. *Non mea, sed Tua voluntas fiat, Jesu amantissime.*"

As conformity with the divine will is a sure means for attaining perfection, we must exercise it at every opportunity. We shall say a few words on its practice, that is, in what events, and in what manner we ought to conform to it.

We should be submissive to the divine will especially in the time of sickness, for sickness, as well as health, comes from the hand of God. He sends it for our correction and amendment and as a means to our sanctification. It may be a source of much merit and great blessings. The Wise Man says: "A grievous sickness maketh the soul sober" (Ecclus. xxxi. 2). In sickness as in health we must preserve the same conformity to the will of God. Does it please the Lord our God to afflict us with some bodily ills, we must receive them from His hand with equanimity. St. Francis de Sales says: "There are many who say to God, 'I give myself to Thee without any reserve,' but there are few who practice this abandonment. It consists in receiving from the hands of God with a certain indifference all things according to the order of His providence."

In the life of St. Clare, by Surius, we read that for thirty-two years she endured the most grievous maladies; yet in all that time she was never heard to utter a single word of complaint. Expressions of thanksgiving were always on her lips. In the life of St. Lidwina also we have a rare and most wonderful example of patient endurance. From it the sick may gain courage and consolation. For

thirty-eight years, without intermission, this saint endured a complication of the most severe and extraordinary pains and afflictions. For thirty of these years she could not rise from her couch nor stand on her feet; but in all that time Almighty God showered on her the most signal graces. Her sublime and perfect abandonment to the divine will was a source of great merit to herself and of constant edification to others. Now some Religious may say: "I would not be troubled about my sickness if I were not such a burden to the community." A complaint like this is not becoming to a Religious, for it reflects upon Superiors as if they were wanting in charity. Superiors, as well as their subjects, are striving after perfection. They, too, are obliged to receive things as coming from the hand of God, and resign themselves to His will. God wills that you should be sick, and that others should undertake the care of you. It is your duty to bear the cross of sickness with quiet resignation, and it is the duty of your Sisters and Superiors to accept their share of the cross with patience and cheerful submission. Again it may be said: "I acknowledge the great charity that reigns in the convent. What troubles me is this, that I can not, on account of my illness, be of any use to the community." To this the venerable Father Avila replies: "Do not think of what you would do if you were well, but of how much you will please God if you are contented in your sickness. If you seek only the will of God what matters it whether you are sick or well? His will is our highest good." Another, perhaps, owing to a chronic affliction or on account of long and tedious illness, finds it difficult to follow the community in many points of the common life. She requires many exemptions and special favors; this saddens her,

and makes her feel as if she were not a real Religious like her fellow-Sisters; she fears also that others may be dissatisfied at seeing her so well cared for and particularly favored. This fear may not be without foundation if the sickness does not show itself exteriorly, if it is known only to God and the poor sufferer, while the exemptions and favors are observed by all. But you must not give up conformity with the will of God. Your merit will be double. Be resigned in all your ills, great or little, as it is God's will that you should endure them; on the other hand, as to what regards the common life, do with exactitude what in you lies, and regret that you can not do more. You will then gain the merit of patient conformity in sickness, and you will share, also, in the merits of your companions who fulfil all other obligations.

What has been said of sickness refers, also, to all its attendant circumstances. St. Basil gives an exemplary lesson to the sick. He says: "We must use physicians and remedies, but without placing our whole confidence in them. Holy Scripture blames this in King Asa, of whom it says: 'In his illness he did not seek the Lord, but rather trusted in the skill of physicians'" (2 Paralip. xvi. 12). We should place all our confidence in God, who sometimes restores to health by means of medicines, and sometimes does not. The Gospel tells us that Our Lord Jesus Christ often cured by His will alone, as in the case of that leper who implored his cure in these words: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Our Lord replied: "I will. Be thou made clean" (Matt. viii. 2, 3). Again, He sometimes accompanied His words with action, as when He mixed clay with His spittle, anointed the

eyes of the blind man, and sent him to wash them in the pool of Siloe (John ix. 11).

Just so does Almighty God act in our own day. Some He cures by means of medicines, others by His will. Many, despite their efforts and their numerous methods of treatment, are left in misery that they may learn to place their confidence only in God. Do not, then, complain of physicians and remedies when they avail you nothing. Accept your condition as coming from the good God. Endure it with joy and conformity to His blessed will in your regard. Forget yourself. Remain in peace, and leave yourself absolutely to the disposition of your Superiors and attendants. Bear in mind the words of St. Paul: "We know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints" (1 Rom. viii. 28). In his preface to the highly commendable work of the Rev. J. P. De Caussade, S.J. on *Abandonment or Absolute Surrender to Divine Providence,* Father Ramière accentuates three principles which form the basis of the virtue of abandonment:

First Principle: Nothing is done, nothing happens, either in the material or in the moral world, which God has not foreseen from all eternity and which He has not willed or at least permitted.

Second Principle: God can will nothing, He can permit nothing, but in view of the end He proposed to Himself in creating the world, namely, in view of His glory and the glory of the Man-God, Jesus Christ, His only Son.

Third Principle: As long as man lives upon earth, God desires to be glorified through the *happiness* of this privileged creature, and consequently in God's designs the interest of man's sanctification

and happiness is inseparable from the interest of the divine glory.

If we do not lose sight of these principles, which no Christian can question, we shall understand that our confidence in the providence of Our Father in heaven can not be too great, too absolute, too child-like. If nothing but what He permits happens, and if He can permit nothing but what is for our happiness, then we have nothing to fear, except not being sufficiently submissive to God. As long as we keep ourselves united with Him and we walk after His designs, were all creatures to turn against us they could not harm us. He who relies upon God becomes by this very reliance as powerful and as invincible as God, and created powers can no more prevail against him than against God Himself.

This confidence in the fatherly providence of God can not, evidently, dispense us from doing all that is in our power to accomplish His designs; but after having done all that depends upon our efforts we will abandon ourselves completely to God for the rest.

This abandonment should extend, in fact, to everything—to the past, to the present, to the future; to the body and all its conditions; to the soul and all its miseries, as well as all its qualities; to blessings; to afflictions; to the good will of men, and to their malice; to the vicissitudes of the material, and the revolutions of the moral, world; to life and to death.

1. Among all the dispositions to which our abandonment can be applied, there are, first, those which depend solely upon God, where human liberty has no part either in producing or averting them. Such are, for example, certain scourges and vicissitudes of the atmosphere; certain accidents impossi-

ble to foresee, certain natural defects of body or soul.

In regard to facts of this order, whether of the past, present, or future, it is evident that our abandonment can not be too absolute. There is nothing to do here but to passively and lovingly endure all that God sends us; to blindly accept in advance all that it may please Him to send us in the future. Resistance would be useless, and only serve to make us unhappy; a loving and frequently renewed acceptance, on the contrary, would make these inevitable sufferings very meritorious.

2. There are other sufferings which come to us through the malice of creatures: persecutions, calumnies, ill-treatment, neglect, injustice, and offenses of every kind. What are we to do when we find ourselves exposed to vexatious things of this sort?

1st. We evidently can not like the offense against God with which they are accompanied; we should, on the contrary, deplore and detest it, not because it wounds our self-love, but because it is an offense against the divine rights, and compromises the salvation of the offending souls.

2d. As for that which concerns us, on the contrary, we should regard as a blessing that which is in itself an evil; and to do this we need only recall the principles previously laid down: not to look only at the creature who is the immediate cause of our sufferings, but to raise our eyes higher and behold God, who has foreseen and permitted them from all eternity, and who in permitting them had only our happiness in view. This thought will be sufficient to dissipate the bitterness and trouble which would take possession of our hearts were we to look only at the injustice of which we are the victims.

3d. In regard to the effects of this injustice already consummated and irreparable, we have only to resign ourselves as lovingly as possible, and carefully gather their precious fruits. It is frequently not difficult to divine the spiritual fruits God destined for us in exposing us to temporal evils, *viz.:* to detach us from creatures, to deliver us from inordinate affections, from our pride, from our tepidity—veritable maladies of the soul, of which the heavenly Physician wishes to cure us, using the malice of our neighbor as a sharp instrument.

4th. If it is in our power to avert the consequences of malice and injustice, and if in our true interest, and in the interest of the divine glory, we deem it necessary to take any measures to this end, let us do so without departing from the practice of the holy virtue of abandonment. Let us commit the success of our efforts to God, and be ready to accept failure if God judges it more suitable to His designs and more profitable to our souls. We are so blind that we always have reason to fear being deceived; but God can not be deceived, and we may be certain, in advance, that what He determines will be best. Therefore we can not do better than abandon with fullest confidence the result of our efforts to Him.

3. Should this abandonment extend equally to our acts of imprudence, to our faults, and all the annoyances of every kind in which they may result?

It is important to distinguish here two things which self-love tends to confound. In the fault itself we must distinguish what is culpable and what is humiliating. Likewise in its consequences we must distinguish what is detrimental to the divine glory and the confusion inflicted on our self-love. Evidently we can not hate too much the fault, prop-

erly so called; nor regret too keenly the injury done to the divine glory. But as for our humiliation, and the confusion inflicted on our self-love, we should rejoice, and acquiesce in it with complete abandonment. The practice of abandonment well understood should deliver us from that impatience which makes us wish to at once attain the summit of perfection, and which serves to keep us from it by turning us from the only path which leads to perfection. This path is humility, and the impatience which we are censuring is another form of pride. Let us make every effort to correct our faults; but let us be resigned to not seeing them all disappear in a day. Let us earnestly, and with the most filial confidence, ask God to grant us that decisive grace which will completely wrest us from ourselves, to make us live only in Him; but let us leave to Him, with an equally filial abandonment, the care of determining the day and hour in which this grace shall be given us.

With still greater reason should we abandon to God the determining of the degree of sanctity which we shall attain upon earth, the extraordinary graces which will accompany this sanctity here below, and the glory with which it will be crowned in heaven. In as far as it depends upon us, we should leave nothing undone to increase this sanctity and this glory, in order not to fall short of the degree God has marked for us; but if we must earnestly devote ourselves to realizing His designs we must not desire to have them other than they are. If our love for God is what it should be, we will thank Him for having granted other souls favors that He has refused us, and we will praise Him no less for our poverty than for our riches.

4. Regarding life and death, time and eternity,

that which perfect abandonment asks is that we observe in our desires the order of God's designs. God created all things for His glory first; and secondly, but inseparably, for our happiness. Let us do as He does: let us never separate the interest of His glory from that of our happiness, but let us always make the second subordinate to the first. Let us love God as the object of our beatitude, but let us love Him above all for His infinite goodness. Let us desire and hope for our eternal happiness; but since this happiness, when we shall enjoy it, must result from the love of God for Himself, let us begin now to seek it as it must be when we realize it, and refer the desire of it, as we will one day refer its enjoyment, to the glory of this great God who desires to be all in all things.

Thus, at one and the same time, we can practice charity and hope, seek the glory of God and our own happiness, fill the designs of Our Creator, and satisfy the deepest and most imperative needs of our nature.

The saints did not do otherwise; and Father Caussade, in one of his letters, proves very clearly that the formulas of apparent despair that they have sometimes used in the transports of their cruel sufferings contained in reality acts of the most meritorious confidence. Elsewhere he also shows most perfectly how ill-founded is this even hypothetic separation between God's interests and our true interests; and he justly concludes therefrom that perfection can not consist in supposing this separation and sacrificing the interest of our eternal happiness to that of the divine glory.

Let us consider what the saints say on submission and abandonment to the will of God. St. Teresa says: "As God knows what is good and

useful for us, He gives to each of us what will tend most to His glory, to our own salvation, and to the good of our neighbor. We deceive ourselves, then, and consult our own interests but little, if we do not abandon ourselves entirely to His good pleasure."

Blessed Henry Suso tells us: "A soul that is truly submissive to the will of God is not attached to anything created: it knows that all that is not God is vanity and nothingness; accordingly it has no other object, no other end, but to die to self, to be resigned always and in all things. The angels find so much satisfaction in doing the will of God that if He asked one of them to come down upon this earth and employ himself in separating good grain from the bad, or in pulling out weeds from a field, he would instantly leave heaven and apply himself willingly and with all his heart to that which God required of him."

He who spoke thus ardently desired to do the will of God. He would prefer, he said, to be the last of creatures, if it were the will of God, rather than be a seraph, and follow his own will.

St. Francis de Sales admonishes us in these words: "You have not attained that purity which you should have, so long as you are not constantly, entirely, and joyously submissive to the will of God in all things, even in those the most repugnant. How beautiful it is to see one divested of all attachments, ready to practice every virtue, to be charitable, sweet with every one, equally calm in consolations or in tribulations, always satisfied if the will of God be done. If you give yourself to the exercise of holy abandonment you will make much progress. It will be with you as with those out at sea with a

favorable wind, abandoning themselves to the guidance of a good pilot."

The Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul having met with a considerable loss, the saint wrote as follows to one of his friends: "Being one of our most intimate friends, I must acquaint you with a loss with which we have recently met: it is not an evil that has befallen us, but a favor which we have received from God, and for which you will help us to return thanks to Him. I call the afflictions which He sends us favors and benefits, particularly when they are well received. It is in His infinite goodness that He has ordered this loss, and He gives us grace to accept it with perfect and entire resignation—I may say with the same joy we would have felt had He sent some great prosperity."

On another occasion St. Vincent wrote regarding the serious illness of one of his companions and the great loss his death would entail to the congregation:

"It appears that Our Lord wishes to take His share of our little Society. It is all His: therefore He has the best right to do as He pleases with it. As for me, my greatest desire is to desire nothing but the accomplishment of His divine will." In the many infirmities with which the saint was visited, particularly during the last year of his life, when he felt his end approaching, he was always the same, perfectly indifferent to consolations, sufferings, or death. He desired above all that the will of God be accomplished in him.

St. John Chrysostom repeated these words so frequently that they might be regarded as his motto: "Lord, glory belongs to Thee for all," *Gloria tibi, Domine, propter omnia.*

While St. Magdalene of Pazzi was a novice, her mistress, knowing her great love for prayer, permitted her to retire to pray at different times while the others were employed in some manual labor. But she did not make use of the privilege. "In performing the same exercises as the others through obedience," she said, "I am sure to do the will of God; in doing anything else, I am rather following my own will, no matter how holy the exercise may be."

Abandonment to divine Providence should extend to the circumstances of our death, as St. Alphonsus Liguori says: "It is necessary that we should be always in such dispositions as to be willing to die at the time and in the manner that God wills."

One day St. Gertrude in ascending a hill fell. Meeting nothing to arrest her fall, she soon reached the bottom of the hill. Providence miraculously preserved her life, and she was not even injured. Her companions asked her whether she had not been afraid of dying without the last sacraments. "No," replied she. "I desire certainly to receive the last sacraments before death, but I desire more ardently that the will of God be accomplished. This is the best disposition in which to be found at the hour of death."

A good, simple, little prayer for a happy death is this: "My God, I desire to die the death that Thou willest I should die; let me die in Thy love."

Bossuet writes as follows on perfect abandonment:

"When we are truly abandoned to God's will, we are ready for all that may come to us: we suppose the worst that can be supposed, and we cast ourselves blindly on the bosom of God. We forget ourselves, we lose ourselves: and this entire forgetfulness of

self is the most perfect penance we can perform; for all conversion consists only in truly renouncing and forgetting ourselves, to be occupied with God and filled with Him. This forgetfulness of self is the martyrdom of self-love; it is its death, and an annihilation which leaves it without resources; then the heart dilates and is enlarged. We are relieved by casting from us the dangerous weight of self which formerly overwhelmed us. We look upon God as a good Father who leads us, as it were, by the hand in the present moment; and all our rest is in humble and firm confidence in His fatherly goodness.

"If anything is capable of making a heart free and unrestrained, it is perfect abandonment to God and His holy will: this abandonment fills the heart with a divine peace. If anything can render a mind serene, dissipate the keenest anxieties, soften the bitterest pains, it is assuredly this perfect simplicity and liberty of a heart wholly abandoned to the hands of God. The unction of abandonment gives a certain vigor to all the actions, and spreads the joy of the Holy Spirit even over the countenance and words. I will place all my strength, therefore, in this perfect abandonment to God's hands, through Jesus Christ, and He will be my conclusion in all things in virtue of the Holy Spirit."

ACT OF ABANDONMENT.

By Venerable Father Pignatelli.

O my God, I know not what shall come to me today; but I am certain that nothing can happen to me which Thou hast not foreseen and ordained from all eternity: that is sufficient for me. I adore Thy impenetrable and eternal designs, to which I sub-

mit with all my heart; I desire, I accept them all, and I unite my sacrifice to that of Jesus Christ, my divine Saviour; I ask in His name, and through His infinite merits, patience in my trials, and perfect and entire submission to all that comes to me by Thy good pleasure. Amen.

Prayer.

My God, I abandon myself to Thee, I give Thee my will. Let Thy will be done in me, by me, over me, in all things and forever.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Exercise of the Presence of God an Aid to the Practice of Perfect Conformity with the Divine Will.

An excellent means to attain conformity with the will of God is the exercise of the presence of God. Conformity with the divine will includes three things, namely, the avoidance of sin, the practice of virtue, and union with God. But these three things are effected by the exercise of the presence of God; for it keeps the soul free from sin; it leads her on to the virtues; and finally, by holy love, procures her union with God.

1. As regards the avoidance of sin, there is no more powerful means for bridling the passions and overcoming temptations than the thought of God's holy presence. St. Thomas says: "If at all times we were mindful of the presence of God we would displease Him very seldom." And St. Jerome remarks that the thought of the presence of God closes the door to sin. St. Teresa says that all our faults arise from not thinking of God as present to us, but imagining Him far away. Long before David recognized this truth. He says: "God is not before his (the sinner's) eyes: his ways are filthy at all times" (Ps. ix. 26). The Abbot Diocles remarks that he who does not think on the presence of God will become either a brute or a devil. The Abbot is right, for such a man will soon be tormented either by sensual or by diabolical desires, which he will not have the strength to resist. The thought of the omnipresence of the Almighty God infused into the

souls of the saints strength and courage to overcome all such attacks. It was this that made the chaste Susanna so courageous against the vile suggestions of the lecherous old men. Although threatened with death, she answered them boldly: "It is better for me to fall into your hands without sin than to sin in the sight of the Lord" (Dan. xiii. 23). The thought of the divine presence converted a miserable woman who had the effrontery to tempt St. Ephrem to sin. In answer to her wicked suggestions the saint told her that if she wanted to sin it should be in the open market-place. "What!" she exclaimed, "sin in the presence of so many people?" The saint replied: "And how could you propose to sin in the presence of God, who beholds us everywhere?" When the poor creature heard this admonition she shed tears, fell on her knees and implored the saint's pardon. Then she begged him to show her how to work out her salvation. The saint, touched by her tears and earnest entreaties, placed her in a convent, where she led a most edifying life, never ceasing to bemoan her past. Something similar happened to the holy Abbot Paphnutius. A certain notorious sinner, named Thais, tempted him to sin, assuring him that they were alone, that none but God could see them. The saint addressed her in an earnest tone: "What! You believe that God sees you, and yet you are willing to sin!" Struck by the saint's tone and words, Thais entered into herself, and began to conceive intense hatred for her past disorder. Yielding to the impulse of grace, she gathered together her fine clothes, her jewels, and all the treasures gained by her evil way of living, made a fire of them in a public place, and retired into a convent. There she lived for three years, fasting on bread and water, and constantly repeating this

prayer: "O Thou who hast created me, have mercy on me!" At the end of that time she died a holy death. Soon afterward it was revealed to a disciple of St. Antony that the happy penitent had won a splendid throne of glory among the saints.

By these examples we see how powerful is the thought of the presence of God against sin. Let us pray with holy Job: "Deliver me, O Lord, and set me beside Thee, and let any man's hand fight against me" (Job xvii. 3). O my God, do Thou Thyself henceforth remind me of Thy presence! Remind me that Thou seest me, and when my enemies rage against me, I shall overcome them all.

2. The remembrance of the presence of God is also a powerful incentive to the practice of the Christian virtues. How valiantly the soldiers fight in the presence of their king! The mere thought that their prince, who can reward or punish, is watching them inspires heroism. And when you yourself are in the presence of your Superiors how attentive you are to your work, with what modesty you behave toward your companions, how punctually you observe the least prescription of obedience! Ah! if you were deeply impressed by the thought that everywhere and at all times the eyes of God are upon you, you would certainly act with the purest intention, you would fly human respect, and you would seek in all your actions only His good pleasure. They who walk in the presence of their Creator think only of pleasing Him, regardless of the creature.

3. The exercise of the presence of God certainly effects an intimate union of the soul with God, since the presence of the beloved always increases love. We know this from experience with our friends, although intimate communication with them often discovers many faults. But how different is the re-

sult of close intercourse with God! The longer we know Him, and the more constantly we keep ourselves in His presence, the more beauty and loveliness do we discover in Him, and the more powerfully are we drawn to Him. To establish intimate union with the Supreme Good it is not enough to say our morning and evening prayers; for, as St. Chrysostom remarks, boiling water soon regains a low temperature when removed from the fire. Just so is it with the spiritual heat of the soul. Its fervor must be kept alive by frequent remembrance of the presence of God and by ejaculations of love. David tells us that he was filled with joy and consolation when he thought of God: "I remembered God, and was delighted" (Ps. lxxvi. 4). However great may be the sadness and dejection of the soul, the loving thought of God will surely disperse all clouds. Souls that love God taste uninterrupted peace. Like the sunflower, which turns always toward the sun, they aim at living and acting always in the presence of the glorious Sun of justice. They heed the injunction of the Lord: "Walk before Me and be perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). This means that they live in perfect conformity with the will of God and labor solely for the glory of God. "He is a true lover," says St. Teresa, "who thinks ever of the beloved."

Of Recalling the Presence of God by Means of the Understanding.

The Exercise of the Presence of God calls into play both the *understanding* and the *will*.

We must, by the understanding, imagine God before us. In many different ways we can, by the operation of the mind, place ourselves in His divine presence. We may in the first place represent our

divine Saviour Jesus Christ as present to us, accompanying us, and observing all our actions. We may imagine Him sometimes in this, sometimes in that, mystery of His life. St. Teresa greatly favors this way of practicing the presence of God. The second manner of recalling the presence of God is perhaps safer and more profitable to the soul. It consists in beholding God with the eyes of faith as present everywhere, constantly beside us, observing all that we do. What matters it that we do not see Him with our corporal eyes? We can not see the atmosphere, and yet we know for a certainty that it surrounds us on all sides. Without it we could neither live nor breathe. We can not see God with the eyes of the body, because He is a pure spirit; but holy faith teaches us that He is constantly present to us. "Shall a man be hid in secret places, and I not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" (Jer. xxiii. 24.) As a sponge in the sea is saturated with water and surrounded by it, so, says St. Paul, we live in God, we have all our being in God: "For in Him we live and move and are" (Acts xvii. 28). "God," says St. Augustine, "observes every action, every word, every thought of each one of us, and that with as great attention as if He had forgotten all other creatures to look at us alone. But as He sees all that we do, say, and think, He takes note of all, in order, at the Day of Judgment, to call us to account, then to reward or punish us." To recall the presence of God according to this second way, it is sufficient to make an act of faith with one's whole heart, and to exclaim: "O my God, I firmly believe that Thou art here present!" This may be followed by acts of love, submission to His holy will, some good resolution, etc.

The third means of recalling the presence of God

is to behold Him in all creatures. They have their being from Him, and they are destined for our service; therefore we should accustom ourselves to look at God in them. His power and goodness shine forth from them. As we gaze upon them we should make acts of love, gratitude, and thanksgiving to Him, remembering that, from all eternity, He thought of calling so many beings into existence for us to win our love. "Learn," says St. Augustine, "to love your Creator in the creature. Do not become attached to those objects that God has created, that you may not lose Him who created them." When St. Teresa looked at the meadows, the woods, the sea, the mountains, the brooks, the flowers, or other beauties of creation, she thought she heard them all reproaching her with her ingratitude to God. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, also, when holding a lovely flower or some fruit in her hand, used to be inflamed with the love of God, and would cry out: "From all eternity God has thought of creating this flower, this apple, for love of me, to give me a proof of His love."

The fourth means of never losing sight of God is to behold Him in ourselves. God is present in us in a way that far transcends His presence in the rest of creation. The Lord dwells in us as in His temple, in His place of abode. "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16.) Therefore, our divine Saviour declared that with the Father and the Holy Ghost He would enter into the soul that loves Him, not for a passing visit, but to take up His dwelling in her: "If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23).

God dwells in a special manner in our soul, and abides in us with singular joy, as He declares to us by the Apostle: "I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God" (2 Cor. vi. 16). There He wills to be loved and adored by us. We ought, therefore, to strive to excite faith in His holy presence, both to humble ourselves before His divine majesty, and to make acts of confidence, self-oblation, and love.

St. Teresa teaches us that the soul should be considered as an interior world, in which the good God deigns to dwell as in another heaven. Speaking of the presence of God in the heart, the saint says: "I think that they who can inclose themselves in the little heaven of their own soul, where is found the Almighty One who created it, have taken an admirable way to perfection, because in a short time they will run a long course." The saints by practicing the presence of God in this way acquired great merit. It was to it the Royal Psalmist referred when he said: "I set the Lord always in my sight, for He is at my right hand that I be not moved" (Ps. xv. 8). Blessed Henry Suso was so attentive to this practice that he performed all his actions in the presence of God, arriving at so great a degree of union that tender aspirations of love were always on his lips. St. Gertrude, also, performed this exercise so perfectly that Our Saviour said of her to St. Mechtildis: "This soul so dear to me walks constantly in My presence. She is always careful to do My will, and to perform all her actions for My greater glory." The same may be said of St. Teresa. No matter with what she might be occupied she never lost sight of her beloved Lord.

Keep yourself constantly in the presence of God. The Lord said to the patriarch Abraham: "Walk

before Me, and be perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). That means, if you walk always in My presence, you will be perfect. Tobias gave his son the same instruction: "All the days of thy life have God in thy mind" (Tob. iv. 6). The Prophet Micheas admonishes us: "I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee . . . to walk carefully with thy God" (Mich. vi. 8).

Of Recalling the Presence of God by Means of the Will.

Having explained the exercise of the understanding, we shall now discuss that of the will in recalling the presence of God. Let us remark in the first place that the happiness of the blessed consists in this, that they uninterruptedly fix their understanding on God, and always remain before Him. But on earth it is humanly impossible to preserve without intermission the remembrance of God's presence; we should, however, make every effort in our power to enjoy the sweetness of God's presence, tranquilly and peacefully, without anxiety or immoderate effort of the understanding. We may, in a threefold manner, maintain the will attentive to the divine presence.

The first way is to raise the heart to God frequently by fervent little aspirations or sighs of love. This may be done everywhere and at all times, at work, at table, or at recreation. These aspirations may consist in acts of love, desire, longing for God, abandonment, self-oblation, thanksgiving, humility, contrition, hope, and confidence. Though fully occupied, nothing can prevent your raising your heart from time to time, and saying to God: "O my God, I desire Thee alone!" "I wish to belong en-

tirely to Thee!" "I give myself entirely to Thee!" "I renounce all for Thy love!" "I thank Thee for all the graces which Thou hast bestowed on me!" "Give me Thy holy love!" "O that all hearts would love Thee!" "My God and my all!" "Blessed be God!" "Blessed be His holy name!" *"Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam!"* "In Thee, my God, I place all my confidence!" "Thy will be done forever!" The ancient Fathers set great value on these short aspirations, since they are better adapted to keeping the soul in the presence of God than long prayers. St. Chrysostom says that he who frequently uses them closes the door to the devil so that he can not torment him with bad thoughts. At stated times, we should awaken our faith in the presence of God, whose immensity fills all space. In the morning, when we awake, our first words should be, "My God, I adore thee; I believe that Thou art everywhere! Wherever I may go to-day, Thou wilt be near me. Protect me, I beseech Thee, and permit me not to offend in Thy sight." Again, recall the divine presence at the beginning of all your prayers, whether mental or vocal. This act of faith will prevent distractions. In every temptation to impatience, or to any other fault, we must recur instantly to the thought of God present and ask His help. This will bring us strength and courage, for there is no more urgent incentive to victory at such moments than the thought that God sees us. David made use of this means to battle against temptation: "My eyes are ever toward the Lord: for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare" (Ps. xxiv. 15). This thought will nerve us, also, to the performance of any difficult act of virtue that may come in our way, as it did the heroic Judith. Having unsheathed the sword, and

grasped the hair of the sleeping Holofernes, before giving the death-blow, she raised her eyes to God, saying: "Strengthen me, O Lord God, at this hour!" (Jud. xiii. 9.)

The second way to preserve the presence of God by acts of the will consists in renewing the good intention during distracting occupations, aiming at doing everything purely to please God. St. John Climacus says that, visiting a certain convent, he met in the cloister one of the monks who had a great deal of work to do. He was the cook, and, exclusive of guests, some of whom were always present, he had to prepare the meals for two hundred and thirty Religious. In the fatigue and hurry consequent on his duty, this good monk maintained remarkable interior recollection; he had, besides, received the gift of tears. Astonished at the sight, the saint asked him how he managed to fulfil so well his onerous charge. The Brother was at first unwilling to speak of himself. But yielding, at last, to St. John's importunities, he answered: "I never think that I am serving men, but God, and I esteem myself unworthy of rest and quiet. The sight of the material fire moves me to tears, since it suggests the dreadful torments of the eternal flames of hell, the purity of God, and the heinousness of sin." So, too, must you serve God alone in everything. At the beginning of every action, when you take any work in hand, say: "Lord, I desire only to do Thy holy will." From time to time during the progress of the work, be mindful to exclaim: "My God, all for Thy glory!" or, "For Thee, my God, through Christ our Lord!" This is a very easy way of keeping yourself in the presence of God without fatiguing the mind, for even the desire to please God is a loving remembrance of His presence. A

third way to recall the divine presence is to retire to the choir, or to one's cell, or to some quiet place, whenever during the day we perceive that distracting affairs have occupied the mind to the exclusion of the thought of God. When a person feels weak from fatigue or fasting, he is careful to take some refreshment in order to regain strength for his labor. How much more should a Religious refresh his soul and recruit his strength by a little recollection in God when he finds that he has grown cold and languid from too much attention to outside affairs! Father Avila used to say that a Religious who does not love and practice prayer is like a fish out of water, out of its natural element. After spending a long time in business or other distractions, you must retire as soon as possible into solitude, there to take breath, as it were, and by loving aspirations again to recollect yourself in God. The blessedness of heaven consists in the love and contemplation of God; hence we conclude that the happiness of a Christian on earth must be found in loving and contemplating God, not face to face, but by holy faith while walking in His presence. In this way is begun, even here in this valley of tears, the life of the blessed in heaven.

Truly the exercise of the presence of God by means of the understanding and the will is an excellent method of attaining conformity with the divine will.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Presence of God Considered in the Hidden Life.

If there is one exercise which conduces more efficaciously than another to our sanctification, it is assuredly that of the presence of God. If one means be more conducive than another to attain that holy exercise, it would seem to be a true and solid devotion to the Heart of Jesus. His most holy soul, being united to the Word, never lost the view of the Beatific Vision, although the beatitude and the joy of that Vision were by a miracle withheld from overflowing into the lower functions of His soul, in order that He might be able to suffer in His humanity.

The nearest resemblance to Our Lord which some of the saints have attained in this respect may be found in such transient glimpses of the divine beauty as we find revealed in their lives. With those extraordinary ways by which God sometimes vouchsafes to visit a few favored souls we have nothing to do at present. When we speak, therefore, in this meditation, of the habitual presence of God, we refer but to that union of the soul with Him which was ordinary in the saints, and which may be attained, in more or less degree, by faithful correspondence with grace.

Our faculty in maintaining the divine presence will be measured by the extent of our knowledge of God, since in proportion to our knowledge of Him will be our love, and it is love that keeps us in recollec-

tion of His presence, and that impels us to think of Him and of all that relates to Him. This the Heart of Jesus teaches us. His soul saw God. It knew Him with a knowledge that no other soul but His could have supported. His love equalled His knowledge, and it was in the mysterious light of such knowledge and such love that He walked on earth—never alone, even in the midst of the most cruel abandonment on the part of creatures—and He was never forsaken, even when given up to the pangs of supreme agony and dereliction.

That which proved the consolation of the human Heart of Jesus, and after Him of all His saints, may be the same in the case of each one of us. Let us apply ourselves to know God's beauty and to hear His voice, and our hearts will quickly learn to turn toward Him, to seek His face, and delight in His presence. The consciousness of that presence will then become an abiding source of tranquil devotion and of peace of heart, if not of sensible joy. It will greet us, at our first awakening, with encouragement to commence another day of trial; it will follow us amid our occupations, console us in our sorrows, support us in our temptations, until we shall sink to rest, when the day is over, in the bosom of that Father whom we have felt so near to us, and whose presence will be our last thought, lulling us to sleep in the calm consciousness of His protection.

As the appreciation of the excellence of this holy exercise increases, the soul finds more facility and more charm in occupying itself with God, and becomes, by degrees, more familiar with the thoughts of Him. It will love to recall the Gospel narratives of the life of our blessed Lord. It will in time learn to feel at home, as it were, among them, and thus it will be enabled to make for itself a solitude, a hid-

den life apart from the material life which externally surrounds it. This habit the Sacred Scripture calls "walking with God," for by it we make Him our companion here below. It is of this habitual dwelling in the divine presence that Jesus affords us so perfect a model in the holy house of Nazareth.

Let us now consider the fruits of constant attention to the divine presence, which are first produced in the heart, and from thence reflected throughout the whole life.

The soul of Jesus looked ever upon the Father's face, and as He looked the flames of love rose ever higher within His Sacred Heart. This is the testimony which He gives of Himself: "He that sent Me is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone; for I do always the things that please Him."

If a servant, from the motive of fear, performs with care and attention those things which please his master when he is conscious of that master's presence, how much more will the faithful souls do this from a motive of love in the presence of Our Father in heaven! Such will be the first result of this holy exercise. The more habitually it is practiced, the more constant also will be the practice of virtue, since the soul's first desire will be to "do always the things that please" the divine object of its love, of whose presence it is so conscious.

It must be remarked, however, that the actions which flow from this holy recollection in God have in them nothing forced, nothing constrained. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The heart and mind are really where their treasure is, that is, in God and in those things which refer to His honor and glory; and this is true recollection, widely different from that studied and simply external modesty which is often exaggerated, which

is maintained with effort, and which is perhaps sometimes assumed through spiritual vanity. When the interior eye has been really attracted by the divine beauty, exterior objects lose their charm, and are held in regard only so far as duty and charity demand. When the inward ear habitually listens to the divine whisper, silence is then a joy and no longer a constraint. Habitual reverence will manifest itself in the whole exterior—a gentle, spontaneous, and unconscious reverence flowing from the union of the soul with God, and from the tranquil happiness which it experiences in the presence of its treasure.

Let us, then, beg a lively faith in the divine presence, and the grace to acquire the sanctifying habit of walking in it continually, so that with truth we may say to God, "I am always with Thee." Then will virtues flourish in our souls beneath that genial influence, like flowers beneath the sun. Thus shall we grow in likeness to Jesus and make advance in our union with His Sacred Heart.*

*From *The Heart of Jesus of Nazareth.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

Humility and its Advantages.

An important and indispensable virtue in the religious life is humility. It is deemed by the saints the foundation and the safeguard of all the other virtues. Although holy humility may not be called the most distinguished among the virtues, yet, as St. Thomas says, it takes the first place, inasmuch as it is the foundation of the others. St. Augustine says that humility must accompany all our actions, must be with us everywhere; for as soon as we glory in our good works they are of no further value to our advancement in virtue.

Before the advent of Jesus Christ upon earth the beautiful virtue of humility was little known and little loved. It was even despised, because pride, the first cause of man's fall, dominated all. The Son of God, therefore, came down from heaven to teach it, not only by word, but also by His example. St. Basil, contemplating the life of the divine Saviour, shows that every moment of it, from His birth to His death, teaches us this particular virtue. He willed to be born in a stable, of a poor mother, to be wrapped in swaddling bands, to be laid in a manger. Like a sinner, He submitted to circumcision; like one unable to defend Himself, He fled into Egypt; He willed to be baptized among sinners and publicans as one of them. Later on, when His followers sought to honor Him by proclaiming Him king, He hid Himself. When He knew that scorn and insult would be heaped upon Him, He appeared in public. The multitude extol His power, the

demons themselves publish His praise by the mouth of the possessed—He commands them to be silent. They load Him with dishonor and ignominy—He utters not a word. And as if to commend humility to us, as if by a last testament, He washes the feet of His disciples. All these examples of humility He crowned by His ignominious death on the cross. Let us hear His words to us: "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also" (John xiii. 15). By these words He appears to say: "My children, I have willingly borne humiliation and insult that you may learn of Me. Do not despise My example." St. Augustine, speaking of the humility of Jesus, says: "If His humility does not free us from pride, I know of no other remedy." Writing to Dioscorus, he says: "Would you know, my friend, which is the virtue that makes us true disciples of Jesus Christ, and unites us intimately with God? Most emphatically I say it is humility. And as often as you ask me I shall tell you the same."

"Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 5), for the proud man is blind; he is, moreover, a thief and a liar, since he arrogates to himself what belongs to God. St. Paul says: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) Could a horse, if it had the gift of reason, boast of its splendid trappings, knowing that, at a sign from its master, they could be stripped from him? The proud man is blind, as was said to the bishop in the Apocalypse: "Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Apoc. iii. 17). What have we of ourselves but nothingness and sin? If we closely examine ourselves we shall find how faulty and imperfect is the little good that we may

do. All the gifts that man possesses, whether of nature, as health, understanding, beauty, skill; or of grace, as good desires, etc., come from God, the Giver of all. This led St. Paul to say: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10). It is certain, as the same Apostle declares, that we can not conceive even a good thought of ourselves: "We are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves" (2 Cor. iii. 5).

How poor is the proud soul! As long as pride reigns in the heart the Spirit of God can not enter; the evil one can do what he pleases therein. To free His servants from pride God sometimes permits them to be assailed by the most shameful temptations, and seems not to hear their prayer for deliverance. St. Paul himself is an instance of the point in question. We find him writing to the Corinthians: "There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 7). "The Lord," says St. Jerome, "would not deliver St. Paul from the sting of that temptation, in order that he might remain humble." Yes, God even permits a man to fall into sin against purity, that he may keep him humble in his own eyes. This happened to King David, who acknowledges that he fell because he had not been humble: "Before I was humbled, I offended" (Ps. cxviii. 67).

St. Augustine says: "If you humble yourself, God stoops to unite Himself to you; if you are proud, He turns away from you." In the same strain the Royal Prophet exclaims: "The Lord looketh on the low, and the high He knoweth afar off" (Ps. cxxxvii. 6). The Lord bends loving eyes upon the humble, but sees the proud, as it were, only from a

distance. As we look at some one far off, not recognizing him, so God seems to say to the proud: "I do not know you." The proud fare badly with God. The proud angels are scarcely a moment in heaven, and behold the Almighty Creator thrusting them into hell then and there prepared for them. God's word can not deceive: "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled" (Matt. xxiii. 12). "God resisteth the proud, and giveth His grace to the humble" (James iv. 6). He has promised to hear every one that prays to Him: "Every one that asketh, receiveth" (Luke xi. 10). But the proud are excluded from this gracious promise. St. James assures us that He resists the proud, resists their petitions. To the humble, on the contrary, He is lavish. He opens His hands, pours out His grace on them, gives them whatever they desire. "Humble thyself to God, and wait for His hands" (Ecclus. xiii. 9), says the Holy Spirit. These words made St. Augustine cry out: "Lord, give me the treasure of humility!" This virtue is, indeed, a treasure, since it attracts the grace of God upon the soul. The heart filled with thoughts of self can not receive divine gifts. It must first be emptied by the knowledge of its own nothingness. David says: "Thou sendest forth springs in the vales; between the midst of the hills the waters shall pass" (Ps. ciii. 10). God pours out the waters of His grace on the valleys, that is, on humble souls; but the mountains, the proud, He overlooks. Hear the lowly Virgin Mother of God extolling the wonders of His goodness to her: "He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid. . . . He that is mighty hath done great things to me" (Luke i. 48). He hath regarded my lowliness, that is, the knowledge of my own nothingness, says the sweet Mother. St. Teresa tells us of herself that

she received the greatest graces when she humbled herself before God in prayer. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart till the Most High behold" (Ecclus. xxxv. 21). Judith, holy and humble, clothed in a hair-shirt, her head strewn with ashes, prayed prostrate on the floor of her chamber: "The prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased thee" (Jud. ix. 16). And again the Royal Prophet says: "He hath regard to the prayer of the humble, and He hath not despised their petition" (Ps. ci. 18). The humble shall receive from God all that they desire. They must not fear being sent away empty-handed and unconsoled. While St. Francis Borgia was still in the world, a very pious man told him that if he wished to advance in the way of perfection he should let no day pass without reflecting on something that would fill him with holy shame and contempt of self. St. Francis followed this advice most faithfully and all that he heard or read or saw he turned to his own confusion. Nor was he satisfied with this. Every morning on rising, he knelt down and kissed the floor three times, reminding himself that he was only dust and that to dust he would return. The example of holiness and humility that he has left us testifies to the fruit he derived from this practice. Let us follow the same counsel. Let us allow no day to pass without reflecting upon what can lead to contempt of self. Let us not desist from this practice until the soul is deeply penetrated with the knowledge of its own poverty and weakness, and filled before God with holy shame and confusion.

St. Gregory used to say: "As pride is a mark of perdition, so is humility an evident sign of predestination." In a word, if we do not obey the teach-

ing of Our Lord, if we do not become as little children in simplicity and humility, we shall not be numbered among the blessed. "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3).

To the poor, the despised, the persecuted, heaven is promised. "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you . . . your reward is very great in heaven" (Matt. v. 11). Observe, it is not only in the life to come that the humble are declared blessed, but also in the present one. "Learn of Me," says our divine Saviour, "because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls" (Matt. xi. 29). Thomas à Kempis says: "Continual peace is with the humble, but vexation and unrest in the heart of the proud." The peace of the humble is best appreciated by a comparison of their state with the restlessness and discontent of the proud. Holy Scripture abounds in passages proving that sinners have no peace. "There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord" (Is. xlviii. 22). "Saying: Peace, peace, and there was no peace" (Jer. vi. 14). "Destruction and unhappiness are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known" (Ps. xiii. 3). Their conscience is never free from trouble and, if they have a taste of peace, it is not unmixed with bitterness. "Behold in peace is my bitterness most bitter" (Is. xxxviii. 17). This refers to sinners in general, but especially to the proud. They are always uneasy, and St. Augustine explains the reason. "Pride," says he, "is always accompanied by envy. It is by reason of these two evils, namely, pride and envy, that the devil is a devil." Hence, we may conclude what effect these vices produce in man, since they wrought such woe for the most noble of the

angelic spirits. A man domineered by those inseparable companions, pride and envy, vainly seeking to be honored by all, and having the mortification of seeing others more honored than he, must of necessity bear in his breast a heart filled with gall and bitterness. He lives in a state of continual agitation and unrest. The proud man is chagrined, depressed, utterly miserable when he sees himself despised, and another exalted.

Holy Scripture gives an excellent picture of the nature and effects of pride in the person of Aman. He was a favorite of King Assuerus, who bestowed great possessions on him, and raised him above all the nobles of his kingdom. He was honored by all, and there seemed nothing left for him to desire. But his happiness was not perfect as long as Mardochai did not rise up to do him honor, did not greet him as he passed. This deprived him of peace, as he owned to his wife and friends. After he had recounted to them his fortunate position, his high office, and all the favors showered upon him by the king, he said: "And whereas I have all these things, I think I have nothing so long as I see Mardochai, the Jew, sitting before the king's gate" (Esther v. 13). And so it is with a proud Religious. She can not bear to be less esteemed than her neighbor, or to have this or that office given to another while she is passed by. Such trifles frequently cause more grief and uneasiness to Religious than more serious injuries do to worldlings. That they have even lost their vocation from such a cause is not unheard of. Imagining that they could remain no longer where so little consideration was shown them, and prating about self-respect demanding its due, more than one has rashly imperilled her eternal salvation by returning to the world. How justly did

St. Francis Xavier exclaim: "O honor and esteem of the world, you have given rise to how much evil! To how much evil you will continue to give rise!"

The humble man is always satisfied. What honor is conferred upon him he considers far above his desert. Is he slighted or injured in any way, he thinks that his sins deserve far worse, and he says with Job: "I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I have deserved" (Job xxxiii. 27). St. Francis Borgia, while on a journey, happened to meet one of his former noble friends. The latter seeing him destitute of the comforts he had once possessed in abundance, pitied him and begged him to take a little more care of himself. The saint responded with a smile: "Do not be anxious about me. I am not so badly off as you think. I have a courier who goes before me, and makes everything ready for me." The man asked: "And who is that courier?" "That courier," answered the saint, "is self-knowledge and the thought of the punishment of hell, which my sins have deserved. With this knowledge, no matter how badly lodged I may be at the inn on my way, I always find my surroundings better than I deserve." Let us pray for humility to that model of humility, St. Francis Borgia. Let us bear in mind that the perfection of the ancient Fathers consisted, as we are told, in loving God, despising self, and judging none.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Humility of the Understanding.

AFTER studying the advantages of humility, we shall now treat of its exercise, and the means of attaining this holy and necessary virtue. "There are two kinds of humility," says St. Bernard, "that of the mind or understanding, by which, reflecting on his own misery and baseness, a man comes to despise himself, and esteem himself worthy of being despised; and that of the will, by virtue of which he desires to be despised and humbled by every one." Without humility of the understanding, that of the will can not be acquired.

Humility of the understanding consists in having a poor opinion of self, in esteeming one's self as wretched and as sinful as one really is. A true self-knowledge begets humility. St. Teresa says that humility is truth; consequently, the Lord loves the humble so much because they love the truth. It is, indeed, true that we are nothing. Of ourselves we possess nothing but sin, hence we are more despicable than nothingness. All the good that we have, or effect, comes from God and belongs to God. The humble man keeps this truth ever before his eyes, and therefore does not praise or glorify himself. He is convinced that he deserves contempt; he can not endure that others should attribute to him merit that he has not, and rejoices when he is despised and treated as he deserves. God is well pleased with the humble. The more a man despises himself, the more exalted he will be in the sight of God, says St. Gregory. St. Magdalene of Pazzi used to teach her

Sisters that there are two foundations of perfection, love of God and contempt of self. She added, moreover, that they who have been more humble on earth will see God more clearly in heaven. St. Augustine says: "Two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self."

We should constantly pray with St. Augustine: "Lord, grant that I may know Thee and know myself; that I may love Thee and despise myself!" Thou art the Supreme Good, and I am poverty itself. The Wise Man says: "He [God] is honored by the humble" (Ecclus. iii. 21), because only the humble recognize Him as the one Supreme Good. If you would honor God, you must keep your misery ever before your eyes, and be ready to accept from the hand of God whatever He ordains.

The first practice of humility should be never to pride one's self on one's good works. Consider the heroic deeds of the saints and their profound humility! A frequent reading of their lives will disabuse us of egotism. There, at least, pride suffers, on beholding what great things the saints did for God, while we have done so little. How can we glory when we remember that if there is any good in us, any virtue, it is a gift of God? "Who would not smile," says St. Bernard, "if the clouds gloried in pouring down their rain?" And so should we deserve to be laughed at if we gloried in the little good that we do.

St. Augustine says: "If a man enumerates his services to Thee, O Lord, what is it that he numbers but Thine own gifts?" When St. Teresa performed a good work, or saw one performed by another, she began at once to praise God for it, knowing that all

good comes from Him alone. The saint, moreover, makes the judicious remark that humility in no wise prevents us from recognizing the special graces which God, perhaps, more lavishly bestows on us than on others. This is not pride, she says. Such knowledge helps to humility and gratitude, since it makes us see that, although less deserving, we are more highly favored. "A soul," continues the saint, "who does not know that she has received great graces from God will never resolve to do great things for God. We must carefully distinguish between what comes from God and what comes from self." St. Paul shrinks not from saying that he labored more for Jesus Christ than all the other apostles: "I have labored more abundantly than all they" (1 Cor. xv. 10). But he immediately adds that all that he has done is the work of divine grace assisting him, "Yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (*ibid.*).

We read in Father Huguet's *Month of the Sacred Heart* that St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus, always practiced in a heroic manner the rules for humility which he gave to his followers. "He was hungry and thirsty for the humility of the Heart of Jesus. The opprobrium which he sought and accepted with thanksgiving attested that he would, at every cost, practice the most perfect humility. Nevertheless what did he do when, accused of being a corrupter of youth, he was condemned to submit to an infamous flogging in presence of the students of the University of Paris? Although he desired ardently to satisfy his thirst for ignominy, according to the example of his divine Master, one consideration arrested him.

"He had gained to Jesus Christ some distinguished young men, who would make His Holy Name known

and His Sacred Heart adored; but if he allowed himself to be beaten publicly, these young men would look upon him with horror, and Ignatius, disgraced, would no longer be able to keep them under the banner of this King; therefore the glory of God and the salvation of souls prevailed over his love for humiliations, and he defended and justified himself. Consequently, at the moment when they expected to see him flogged and disgraced at the feet of the rector of the University, they saw, on the contrary, and with utter astonishment, the venerable Superior fall at his feet and ask pardon for having too easily believed the calumnious reports, and then proclaim openly, before the whole University, Loyola to be a model of virtue, and a saint."

Secondly, as you know that without Almighty God you can do nothing, you should never rely on your own strength, but, like St. Philip Neri, mistrust self. Owing to the fact that the proud rely on their own strength they fall. Consider what happened to St. Peter. He declared that neither sufferings nor death would be able to separate him from his divine Master: "Yea, though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee" (Matt. xxvi. 35). Because he uttered these words in a spirit of self-confidence, he had the misfortune to deny his Master almost as soon as he entered the house of the high priest. Let us profit by his sad example, and guard carefully against trusting to our good resolutions, our good will; let us place all our confidence in God, frequently repeating: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13).

Yes, I can do all things, but not of myself. I can do them only in God, who is my strength. Then you may hope to do great things, for Isaias says:

"They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength" (Is. xl. 31). The humble draw new strength from their confidence in the Lord. By distrusting themselves they become strong with the strength of the Almighty One. He who desires that God should make use of him for great things should become the most humble. If the enemy seeks to tempt you by assuring you that you can rely on yourself in all circumstances, that you are safe, that you will not fall, say with David: "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded" (Ps. xxx. 2). I have placed all my hope in Thee, my God. Suffer me not to be brought to shame. Let me not lose Thy grace and become a slave of hell.

Thirdly, if you fall into sin, be not discouraged, but humble yourself, lament your fall, and as you now more plainly see your own weakness turn with still greater confidence to your God. To be impatient with yourself would proclaim a want of humility; surprise at your fall would indicate pride and conceit. It is at the time of temptation and sin that you must trust more fully in the goodness and compassion of God. Your infidelity must be a new incentive to still greater hope in His mercy. This is what the Apostle wishes to teach us when he says: "To them that love God, all things work together unto good" (Rom. viii. 28). Under "all things," St. Augustine includes even sins, inasmuch as they lead to contrition and humility. One day Our Lord said to St. Gertrude: "If a person soils his hand, he washes it, and then it is cleaner than before. And so with the soul after sin. If she purifies herself by true contrition, she will be more pleasing to Me than before." God sometimes allows souls that are not well grounded in humility to fall into faults, that they may acquire distrust of self, and place all their

hope in His assistance. Have you committed some fault? Rise up by an act of love and contrition, firmly resolved to do better and to confide in God alone.

Fourthly, should you hear that another has fallen into grievous sin, do not express wonder, but compassion, and tremble for yourself. Never glory in your freedom from the faults that you remark in others. As a punishment, the Lord might permit you to commit similar transgressions. The Apostle Paul warns his disciples never to treat a sinner with disdain, and before correcting any one to reflect that they, too, might very easily fall into the same, if not greater, sins. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. vi. 1).

The Abbot Machetes, as Cassian relates, humbly acknowledged, on a certain occasion, that he had fallen most shamefully into three particular faults which he had censured impatiently and with undue severity in his brethren. Truly humble souls, enlightened from above, recognize better than others not only the perfection of God, but also their own poverty and sinfulness. The saints, therefore, although leading lives so devout, so different from those of others, considered themselves the vilest sinners on earth. St. Francis of Assisi, for example, called himself the greatest of sinners. St. Thomas of Villanova was in continual anguish of mind at the thought of having to render an account to God of his sinful life, as he called it. St. Gertrude was amazed that the earth did not open under her feet and swallow her up on account of her sins. St. Paul the Hermit cried out with tears, "Woe to me, poor

sinner! I do not deserve to bear the name of monk!" Father Avila relates something similar of a very devout person, who begged God to allow her to see the state of her soul. Her prayer was granted. Although she had never committed a mortal sin, her soul appeared to her so hideous and abominable that she exclaimed: "O my God, for Thy mercy's sake, take from my sight this monster!"

Another excellent practice of humility is never to prefer one's self to another. Let us think of our own sins, of our own weaknesses, and abase ourselves. We know for certain the sins that we have committed, while we do not know those of others. Again, we do not know how many hidden virtues may belong to him whom we despise. We must reflect, also, that if we had made good use of our measure of light and graces we should be saints. Had Almighty God given those graces to an infidel, he might now, perhaps, be a seraph of sanctity, while we are still so imperfect. The thought of our ingratitude should urge us to humble ourselves under all circumstances, for St. Thomas says: "Sin becomes great in proportion to the ingratitude of the sinner." A single sin, therefore, that one man may commit, may be more grievous in the sight of God than a hundred committed by another favored with fewer graces. God's gifts have been lavished on you, and you well know how many are your sins. Your whole life has been an unbroken chain of voluntary faults, and your good works, if you have any, are, perhaps, so full of self-love and imperfection, that they deserve more punishment than reward.

From the foregoing considerations, you ought, as St. Magdalene of Pazzi recommends to all Religious, esteem yourself unworthy even to kiss the ground

on which others walk. From the depths of your nothingness, therefore, raise your voice to God, and exclaim: "O God, come to my assistance! O Lord, make haste to help me!" Help me, or I perish! Help me, or I shall offend Thee more grievously than all others! Repeat this aspiration frequently. Let us conclude with the celebrated words of St. Bernard: "The soul has nothing to fear from humiliation, however great it may be; but she must carefully shun the least pride, for it might plunge her into the depths of misery."

CHAPTER XXV.

Humility of the Will.

HUMILITY of the understanding, as has been said, consists in being convinced that we are deserving of contempt. But humility of the will is greater and more meritorious. It consists in the desire to be despised by others, and in rejoicing in contempt. St. Bernard says of humility of the will: "The first degree of humility consists in this, that one has no desire to be placed over others; the second, that he desires to be subject to others; the third, that in a state of subjection he bears in a tranquil manner every offence that may be heaped upon him." This is properly the humility of heart which Jesus Christ teaches when He says: "Learn of Me, that I am meek and humble of Heart!" In one of his May sermons on *Mary Magnifying God,* Father William Humphrey, S.J., says: Humility is not self-depreciation, or a making one's self out to be less than one is, or worse than one is. Humility is simply the clear, conscious knowledge, the abiding and vivid recollection, the practical recognition and confession, that one is a creature, and, as such, has a Creator, from whom depends, not only all that one has, but also all that one is. The virtue of humility is, in other words, the first article of the Creed, "I believe in God," carried out into practice. We can not move hand or foot, or draw a breath, or conceive an idea, or utter a word, without concurrent action and direct cooperation on the part of Our Creator. In all things we are entirely and absolutely dependent on the triune God—on the Almighty, who

made us. "In Him we live and move and are" (Acts xvii. 28).

"In order to be humble, this knowledge by the creature of its dependence upon its Creator must be not merely speculative but practical. It must be not merely possessed by and abiding in the intellect, but acting on and moving the *will*. It must be not merely an idea, but an idea carried out into action. The fruit of humility is obedience. There is no living humility without obedience. God is a spirit with an intelligence and a will; and of that will He has given an external expression in a law; and by means of that law His uncreated will presses on the will of His rational creatures; and when the rational creature submits beneath that pressure and obeys, it thereby confesses its created nature, and so performs an act of humility."

This humility has many degrees, and especially three. "The *first* degree of humility," as Father Vercruysse says in his *Meditations*, "consists in the habitual disposition of losing all things, possessions, reputation, health, life itself, and to suffer all things rather than commit a mortal sin. This first degree is necessary for all Christians. The second degree consists in the habitual disposition of losing all and suffering all rather than commit a deliberate venial sin. Every true Religious ought to strive to attain it; otherwise (1) he will keep in the first degree only with difficulty, or rather he will not do it. 'He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little' (Ecclus. xix. 1); (2) he can not imagine he is fulfilling the obligation he has contracted before God of tending to perfection; for nothing is more opposed to perfection than venial sin; (3) he can never enjoy true peace of heart because he is resisting God's designs upon him: 'Who hath re-

sisted Him, and hath had peace?' (Job ix. 4); (4) he will never be fit to do great things for the salvation of souls.

"The third degree consists in the disposition of rather being poor with Jesus Christ in His poverty than in abundance; of rather being forgotten and despised with Jesus Christ, who was humiliated and injured, than to live in honor; rather to be on the cross with Jesus crucified than to enjoy the consolations and delights of this life, in order that we may have a greater resemblance to Jesus, our divine Model, and be better able to prove our love. This habitual disposition, or third degree of humility, is not impossible to human weakness sustained by grace. It is the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ; it gives peace and joy of heart in the midst of tribulations, an abundance of divine blessings, the assurance of salvation and the pledge of greater glory in heaven."

The ideal Religious will make every effort to attain this third degree of humility, which is the highest degree of Christian perfection, containing in itself all that is most heroic in virtue, and producing a most intimate union, as well as resemblance with Jesus Christ, who for love of us willingly embraced the ignominy of the cross: "Having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. xii. 2), and who communicates Himself fully to those souls who give themselves entirely to Him. It is the most meritorious way of salvation, because it implies the greatest love and an uninterrupted course of sacrifices. Let us pray with fervor and constancy: "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine!"

As Father Huguet says in *The Month of the Sacred Heart:* "Humility is the characteristic and

distinctive virtue of the Heart of Jesus, the virtue that He loved above all the others, and recommended in His discourses; the virtue that He supported by His own example, inspired His friends to practice and recompensed in His saints. He was humble of heart, for His humility was one of choice, a sincere humility and one accompanied with the interior dispositions conformable to the state of a voluntary victim of sin.

"What a part humility plays in the life of Jesus! It animates His acts, and all His mysteries are its manifestations. The humility of the Heart of Jesus causes Him to descend from heaven to earth, and becomes the law of His Incarnation. Humility held Him concealed for nine months in Mary; humility placed Him in a crib; humility made Him fly into Egypt, live obscure and obedient in Nazareth, penitent in the desert, and covered with confusion under the ignominious clothing of our crimes. Humility directs the words and actions of His public life. Humility becomes His well-beloved spouse, and He loved it even to excess, even to a sort of delirium, in the later mysteries of His mortal life! . . . And yet He finds the secret of surpassing all these prodigies of humility, and of perpetuating them in the Blessed Eucharist!

"The humility of Our Lord was of another nature, and much more profound than ours. He had quite a different and more eminent knowledge of the infinite distance there is between the greatness of God existing by Himself and the baseness of His creatures drawn from nothing; and as He united in His own person these two extremes His soul was continually plunged into the most lively and profound sentiments of the divine mystery and of His own baseness. Jesus, humble Jesus, give me humility, teach

me humility! I know that if I possess humility I possess with it all graces, as God refuses nothing to the humble. I know that by humility I can glorify Thy name, and please Thy Heart. 'Thou wilt save the humble people,' said David. 'Thou hast regarded the humility of thy handmaid,' said the holy Virgin.

"O Saviour, abject and humble! give me the science of the saints, self-knowledge, and the desire of self-contempt. O good Jesus! who hast suffered for love of me so much opprobrium and humiliation, impress in my heart esteem for it and make me desire to practice it."

But by what means can one attain this humility? By the total abandonment of one's self to God's holy will, by placing one's self without reserve into the hands of our good Lord and Master to be disposed of according to His pleasure. We can give ourselves. When this gift is made entirely and forever, God fulfils His designs upon us, and gives us all that of which we have need to cooperate in their execution. The first light that we receive from Heaven should produce in us humility, which will finally merit for us all the others. Genuine humility leads to perfection. Humility means sanctity. A heavenly treasure indeed is that profound humility which is generous, peaceable, and unchangeable; which, on one side, places us in the quality of sinners, beneath nothingness, and on the other elevates us above the world, the demon and ourselves, and renders us great with the greatness of God, strong with the strength of God, and holy with the holiness of God.

The more purely one loves, the more perfect is his humility. Pure charity despoils man of himself; it

clothes him with Jesus Christ: and in that consists true humility. It causes us to live no longer in ourselves; it causes Jesus Christ to live in us. "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me," says St. Paul (1 Gal. ii. 20).

St. Augustine's beautiful and sublime prayer, *"Domine Jesu! Noverim me, Noverim Te,"* commends itself to every Religious. "His Holiness Pope Leo XIII.," as the *New Raccolta* tells us, "by a Brief of September 25, 1883, granted to all the faithful who with a contrite heart and devotion shall recite this petition, an indulgence of fifty days, once a day."

DOMINE Jesu, noverim me, noverim te,
Nec aliquid cupiam nisi te.
Oderim me et amem te;
Omnia agam propter te.
Humiliem me, exaltem te;
Nihil cogitem nisi te.
Mortificem me et vivam in te:
Quæcumque eveniant accipiam a te.
Persequar me, sequar te,
Semperque optem sequi te.
Fugiam me, confugiam ad te,
Ut merear defendi a te.
Timeam mihi, timeam te,
Et sim inter electos a te.
Diffidam mihi, fidam in te,
Obedire velim propter te.
Ad nihil afficiar nisi ad te,
Et pauper sim propter te.
Aspice me, ut diligam te.
Voca me, ut videam te
Et in æternum fruar te. Amen.

LORD Jesus, let me know myself, let me know Thee,
And desire nothing else but Thee.
Let me hate myself and love Thee;
And do all things for the sake of Thee.
Let me humble myself, and exalt Thee.

And think of nothing but only of Thee.
Let me die to myself, and live in Thee,
And take whatever happens as coming from Thee.
Let me forsake myself and walk after Thee;
And ever desire to follow Thee.
Let me flee from myself, and turn to Thee;
That so I may merit to be defended by Thee.
Let me fear for myself, let me fear Thee;
And be among those who are chosen by Thee.
Let me distrust myself, and trust in Thee,
And ever obey for the love of Thee.
Let me cleave to nothing but only to Thee,
And ever be poor for the sake of Thee.
Look upon me, that I may love Thee;
Call me, that I may see Thee
And forever possess Thee. Amen.

Genuine humility keeps the mind serene and the heart unruffled in the midst of persecution. Commenting upon these words of Job: "I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I have deserved" (Job xxxiii. 27), St. Gregory says: "Many express contempt of themselves with their lips, but can not bear to be told aught disparaging." If they talk of themselves slightingly, they do not speak, as Job did, in a spirit of truth, nor as they think in their inmost soul. Their humility is not sincere, not genuine; it is assumed. They desire to be esteemed humble, though they are not humble. If they had genuine humility they would not be so sensitive to criticism, they would not excuse and defend themselves so strenuously, they would not become so excited and confused. Cassian tells a story of a monk of this kind, who once visited the Abbot Serapion. In speech and bearing he was most humble. He declared himself the greatest sinner, and was constantly vilifying himself. He did not deserve to breathe the air, he was unworthy that the earth

should bear him, such were his words. He would sit only on the ground, and suffer no one to wash his feet. After their meal, the abbot began a conversation on some points of the spiritual life, and gave his guest a little good advice. Among other things, he told him very gently that, as he was still young and strong, it would be more to the purpose to work for his living as did the other monks, instead of roaming from cell to cell. The monk took the advice badly and showed his anger in his countenance. Then the abbot said to him: "How is this, my son? Just now you spoke contemptuously of yourself, and yet you can not take, without anger and resentment, a little advice given in all gentleness and love. Did you, perhaps, expect me to apply to you the words of the Wise Man: 'The just is first accuser of himself' (Prov. xviii. 17), since you said so much that was bad of yourself, and did you merely seek by an appearance of self-contempt to win praise?"

Alas! how often the same thing happens in many convents! A Religious acknowledges that she is the most sinful person in the world, that she has deserved hell a thousand times, but let the Superior or one of her Sisters gently remind her of a fault, or call attention in general terms to her tepidity and bad example, and she at once defends herself, and inquires in an angry voice: "What have you remarked in me? What is amiss? Keep your admonitions for such and such a one, who do far worse than I." But how is this? You have often said that you deserved hell a thousand times, and now you can not bear a word! Ah! such humility is on the lips; it is not of the heart. It is very far from the humility that Jesus Christ has commanded.

"Woe to us!" exclaimed St. Gregory; "by our

hypocrisy and dissimulation we angle for the esteem of the world. What appears humility in us is really the grossest pride. We bow down before men that they may praise and esteem us. If this is not so, why do you say of yourself that which you do not want others to believe? Did you speak from the heart, and to witness to the truth, you would wish to be believed. But if you do not wish to be believed, it is a sign that your apparent humility is only a bait to gain the esteem of men." The Holy Spirit teaches us the same: "There is one that humbleth himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit" (Ecclus. xix. 23). Could there be greater deceit, greater dissimulation than to lower and abase one's self in order to gain the esteem of men? Could there be greater pride than to wish to appear humble? "To strive after the honor of humility by aping humility is no virtue," says St. Bernard, "but the subversion of virtue." St. Ambrose inveighed against such hypocrisy: "Many have the appearance, but not the virtue of humility. They display it outwardly, despise it inwardly."

Pride and craving after esteem are so immoderately great in some that they find a thousand ways to gratify their vanity. Whether in a straightforward or indirect way, they seek honor. "The proud," says St. Gregory, "fancy all they do well done. Generally they beg to be told of their faults, being persuaded that they will hear themselves praised. The request to be shown their faults appears to spring from humility. But they have no humility; they have no other end in view than to be praised. Others, again, begin by declaring themselves and all that they do worthy of blame. They express dissatisfaction with their work only to court approbation, and to have the pleasure of hear-

ing it said that it could not have been done better. Spiritual writers call such humility "Humility with a hook." As a fisherman uses line and hook to draw in what he can not reach himself, so the proud employ false humility to secure the praise which can not be otherwise obtained. St. Vincent de Paul says that humility looks most beautiful to all who merely gaze at it, but its exercise is most repellent to nature; for true humility consists in the love of one's own abjection. St. John Climacus remarks that he who calls himself a great sinner is not thereby humble, unless he sincerely wishes others to credit what he says and to treat him accordingly. "It is all very well," says the saint, "to use vilifying terms of one's self, but it is better still to receive with serenity the ill that others say about us, and even to rejoice at it."

All teachers of the spiritual life admonish us not to say anything that could redound to our praise. This advice is similar to that which Tobias gave his son: "Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words" (Tob. iv. 14). The Apostle Paul has taught us the same by his example. After enumerating, for the edification of the faithful and the honor of God, the great things he had accomplished, having been rapt even to the third heaven, he says: "I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me" (2 Cor. xii. 6). "How nobly," says St. Bernard, speaking of this passage, "does the Apostle say: 'I forbear!' The arrogant do not forbear, the proud do not forbear, neither does he who prides himself on his works, nor he who tries to pass for that which he is not. Only the truly humble man forbears for the sake of his own soul; he loves to remain unknown and esteemed as noth-

ing." "And this," says *The Imitation,* "is the highest science, the most profitable lesson, truly to know and despise ourselves."

St. Arsenius was the tutor of Arcadius and Honorius, the sons of the Emperor Theodosius, whom they succeeded on the imperial throne. He had held high positions in the world, and he was distinguished for profound learning. After becoming a monk, no word ever escaped his lips that smacked of pride or gave the faintest hint of his great knowledge. He used to apply to the most simple of the monks for lessons in the spiritual life, declaring that he was not worthy to be their scholar in so sublime a study. In his conduct toward his brethren he was frank and cordial, simple and unassuming. We are told in the life of St. Jerome that he was descended from a noble family, and yet in all his works we find not the least hint of it. Set no value on what you were or were not in the world. Virtue and especially humility are prized in a Religious.

If you would be truly humble, never praise yourself in any way, as has been said above. Be silent on your general conduct, your talents, your good works, your distinguished descent, your relatives. "Let another praise thee, and not thy own mouth," says the Wise Man (Prov. xxvii. 2). Remember the proverb: "Self-praise is no recommendation." If you find it necessary sometimes to speak of yourself and your affairs, try rather to depreciate than to elevate yourself. "In humbling yourself, you have nothing to fear," says St. Bernard; "but in elevating yourself even at the smallest expense of truth, you may do yourself great harm." He who, in passing through a low doorway, stoops more than is necessary, receives no injury; but he who

does not lower his head sufficiently, were it only by a finger's breadth, will be sure to hurt himself. If you must recount your deeds, choose rather to make known your faults than those actions that may have some little appearance of virtue. But the best way of all is to say neither good nor bad of yourself.

St. Bonaventure, in an excellent argument, says: "Be assured your good qualities are perceived by others; if you yourself are silent in regard to them, they will love you all the more, and double praise will be yours: first, for the good qualities, and secondly, for the fact of your hiding them. But if you try to show them off, you will be ridiculed. In the same degree as they before esteemed you, they will now despise you, and in the same proportion that you once edified, you will now disedify."

If others praise you, humble yourself interiorly, and cast a glance on your manifold faults. St. Gregory says: "The proud rejoice in false praise; the humble, on the contrary, are saddened and mortified even by well-deserved praise. They are like David, who said of himself: 'I am poor and in labors from my youth; and being exalted, have been humbled and troubled'" (Ps. lxxxvii. 16). The saint means that the humble man is sad on hearing himself praised, because he does not attribute to himself the qualifications ascribed to him, and because he dreads to lose, by self-complacency, whatever merit he may have acquired in the sight of God. It grieves him to think that it might be said to him: "Thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime" (Luke xvi. 25). You have gloried in your pride, and so received your recompense. The praise that elates the proud abashes the humble. The Wise Man teaches this when he says: "As silver is tried in the fining-pot, and gold in the furnace, so a man

is tried by the mouth of him that praiseth" (Prov. xxvii. 21). Is the gold or silver pure? The fire cleanses it, and all that is impure in it is consumed by the flames. Praise, says the Wise Man, produces the same effect. If it puffs a man up, he is not pure gold or silver, for he does not stand the assay of the tongue. But if he humbles himself when praised, he is pure gold, since the fire of the tongue does not consume him. He is, on the contrary, refined and purified by it. The humble man keeps his peace in the midst of humiliations.

Bear in mind the words of St. Francis of Assisi: "I am only what I am in the sight of God." Do you think that God values you more highly because man esteems you more? Understand that if you take pleasure in the praise of men, and thereby become haughty and exalt yourself above others, He will instantly repulse you, though men may continue to praise. Be assured that human laudation makes you no better than you are. St. Augustine says: "Just as insults and invectives do not deprive us of the merit of virtue, so the praise of others does not make us better than we really are."

If you must guard against complacency in the praise you may receive, still more cautious must you be with regard to honors and dignities. Never aim at such things in the convent. According to the advice of St. Magdalene of Pazzi, fly from whatever makes a show, for in it pride is surely concealed. Yes, it is not enough to fly from it—you must conceive aversion for it. St. Hilarius maintains that all the honors of the world are baits of the devil, by which he gains souls for hell. If vainglory is productive of so much unhappiness in the world, it is far more ruinous in convents. St. Leo says that the Church of God is greatly injured and

dishonored by the contentions of ambitious Religious and vainglorious priests, who ought to be examples of humility. St. Teresa, speaking of Religious, says, "The Spirit of God can never reign where vainglory dwells. We must regard the convent as lost whose inmates strive after honor and precedence. I would rather see the convent reduced to ashes than that vainglory should find entrance into it." St. Jane de Chantal said the same: "I would rather see my convent swallowed up by the earth than that vainglory and desire for office should creep into it." St. Francis Xavier says: "It is unworthy of a Christian, who ought to have the shame of Jesus Christ constantly before his eyes, to desire worldly honors or rejoice in them." How much more shameful is it in a Religious, who has consecrated herself entirely to Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour, who spent so many years on earth unknown and despised! St. Magdalene of Pazzi says: "The honor of a Religious consists in placing herself beneath every one, consequently, she dislikes being placed above or preferred to any one." St. Thomas of Villanova warned his brethren: "Vie with one another as to who shall be the more humble, and therefore the more pleasing to Jesus Christ." Cry out with David: "I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners" (Ps. lxxxiii. 11). I prefer to lead a humble life in the house of my God rather than enjoy the honors and distinctions of the world. Banish the thought of its vanities by reflecting on the words of St. Bonaventure: "Would you be holy? Then desire nothing more than to remain unknown, and to be counted as nought."

Do not envy those Religious who have more in-

telligence, more ability, or who are more esteemed and honored than yourself; on the contrary, feel a holy jealousy only for those whom Almighty God loves better, who are more humble than you. Humiliation is worth more than all the honors, all the applause of the world. The most sublime science of a Religious consists in knowing, loving, and glorifying God; in humbling herself, in esteeming herself as nothing, in rejoicing when she finds herself despised and neglected. Perhaps God has withheld distinguished talents from you because, in His divine foresight, He saw that they would lead you to destruction. Be satisfied with your more ordinary or less brilliant gifts, embrace the little opportunities that they afford you to practice humility, which is the surest, yes, the only way to holiness and peace in this world and eternal salvation in the next. Does your neighbor understand better than you how to discharge business affairs, and how to procure general esteem? Then let all your care be to surpass her in virtue, and especially in humility, according to the admonition of the Apostle: "In humility let each esteem others better than himself" (Phil. ii. 3). He who has the honor of the first place has, also, the risk of becoming vain, and is in danger of losing sight of heavenly things, as David says: "And man, when he was in honor, did not understand: he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them" (Ps. xlviii. 13). If you would walk securely, fly honor, and willingly embrace those occupations that are held in low esteem. The Religious who earnestly desires self-sanctification will always seek the very lowest offices in the convent; she will rejoice in performing the most menial services, congratulating herself on being allowed to do what others shun. The spouse in the Canticles

is compared sometimes to a solitary, sometimes to a warrior, and again to a vine-dresser. But in all these different characters, she is always the beloved of the sacred Spouse. The Religious, in like manner, should do all that she does through love for the Saviour, and in all her occupations appear as the beloved of Jesus Christ. Animated by this spirit, no service should appear to her unworthy of her acceptance. The duties esteemed lowest and most degrading by worldlings are the highest and most honorable in the convent, the most desired by the saints, since Jesus Christ takes most pleasure in them.

St. Augustine says: "In our humility consists our perfection." Since we are so imperfect in the exercise of the different virtues, we should, at least, be perfect in the art of humbling ourselves. If an occasion presents itself to practice a little act of humility, as, for instance, when we receive some correction while attending to our duties, we should rejoice and accept it as desirable. If blamed justly, let us offer our shame and our blushes to God in satisfaction for the fault that we have committed. As regards all accusations, both the true and the false, it is very meritorious to refrain from any defense of ourselves. St. Teresa says: "A Religious gains more by neither defending nor excusing herself when accused of a fault than by hearing ten sermons." It may be necessary, however, in exceptional cases to defend one's self, in order to prevent a public scandal or an injury to a good cause.

Again, beloved soul, if you wish to attain perfect humility, you must be ready to bear patiently whatever contempt and bad treatment you may encounter. He who sincerely deems himself worthy of contempt on account of his sins, meekly bears it when it

comes. Humiliation is the touchstone of the saints. St. Chrysostom says: "Meekness under injuries is the surest sign of humility." And St. Francis of Assisi, speaking on the same subject, says: "Many place their holiness in multiplied prayers and the performance of other good works, but they can not bear the least affront. They do not understand that the endurance of contempt is much more meritorious." It is better to bear an injury than to fast ten days on bread and water. If, for instance, something is granted to one of your Sisters that is denied to you; if others are listened to and you are ridiculed; if others are praised for all that they do, and are chosen for honorable offices, while no notice is taken of you; yes, if in all things and on every occasion you are put down, and your neighbor exalted, then will it be seen, says St. Dorotheus, that you are truly humble, if you accept all with tranquillity and satisfaction. Pray for those who wound you most; they are truly the physicians appointed by God to cure your pride, that dreadful sickness which might cause your death.

When we voluntarily take upon ourselves certain acts of humility, we do well; but the very best humiliations are those that come to us unsought. If, for instance, some one reproves us, complains of us, injures us, derides us, and we receive it patiently as from the hand of God, and bear it for the love of Jesus Christ mocked and derided, then do we practice true humility. Let us remember the words of the Holy Ghost: "Gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation" (Ecclus. ii. 5). "Virtue without trial is no virtue," says St. Magdalene of Pazzi. Whoever does not bear contempt can never attain perfection. "My spikenard sent forth the odor thereof" (Cant. i. 11),

says the spouse in the Canticles. The spikenard is an aromatic plant, which gives forth its perfume only when crushed. O the delicious perfume the humble soul sends up to God when she receives contempt patiently and rejoices at being ill-treated and little esteemed! When the holy monk Zacharias was asked what one should do to attain true humility, he took his cowl, threw it on the ground, and stamping on it, said: "He who rejoices in being treated as I treat this cowl is truly humble." How happy is the death of the Religious who has led a despised life in the cloister, who has borne contempt with patience! Such souls do not hate their persecutors. Ah, no! At their dying hour they will thank and bless them. St. John Climacus tells of a monk who, for fifteen years, was looked upon as of no account, and treated with contempt by his brethren. When Albarius, such was his name, lay on his deathbed, he thanked them heartily for the love they had always shown him by keeping him in holy humility, and soon after expired in the peace of heaven. St. Magdalene of Pazzi says that the tenderest caresses the heavenly Bridegroom bestows on His beloved souls are usually crosses and vexations. Let us keep the words of Our Lord ever before our minds: "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Luke vi. 22). St. Peter says on this point: "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, you shall be blessed; for that which is of the honor, glory, and power of God, and that which is His Spirit, resteth upon you" (1 Pet. iv. 14).

The saints became saints not by approbation and honor, but by contempt and humiliation. The holy martyr Ignatius, who was highly esteemed by all

who knew him, was led to Rome as a criminal, to be thrown to the wild beasts. On the journey the guard overwhelmed him with every kind of insult, but in the joy of his heart Ignatius exclaimed: "Now I begin to be a disciple of Christ!"

What did not St. Jane Frances do, during the seven years that she lived with her father-in-law, to gain the heart of a servant who was insolent and who treated her with continual contempt! She endeavored to please her in all she could imagine that would be agreeable to her. On seeing the Baroness de Chantal thus humble herself to one who became more impertinent the more kindness she received, some one remarked: "You but lose your time if you strive to win her by such treatment." The saint replied: "That might be if I thought of her alone; but what is done for God can not be lost, and in proportion that men are ungrateful God is more liberal." "When your father-in-law dies, you will no doubt free yourself from such a wicked creature," some one remarked. "No, I will arm myself then to defend her," she said. "God makes use of her to give me a cross; why should I do her harm?" It was also said to her that she and not this servant should have the government of the house. "God has regulated it thus for my benefit," she replied; "for now I have more time to give to my exercises of piety."

St. Francis Xavier, while preaching at Macao in the presence of a great number of infidels, was insulted by the people, who threw stones at him, in order to silence him. The saint continued, seemingly unconscious of them; which so touched their hearts that they were more moved by his patience and meekness than by what he was saying, and many became converted.

"You are astonished because I suffer with tranquillity this insolent attack," said St. Francis de Sales to a Religious who had heard injurious language addressed to him. "Do you not see that God has ordained, from all eternity, the grace He has given me to support voluntarily this opprobrium? Should I not drink the chalice which has been prepared by the hands of so good a Father?"

Many persons visited St. Francis Xavier solely for the purpose of witnessing his admirable sweetness and self-control. St. Ignatius Loyola, passing one day with some of his companions near a field where some men were at work, was ridiculed by them, and called names. The saint stopped a moment, looked at them with a smiling face, then turned and gave them his blessing; which so disconcerted them that, struck with admiration, they exclaimed: "It is a saint! it must be a saint!" The calm endurance of contempt is both meritorious and edifying. "The meek," says St. John Chrysostom, "who peaceably bear injury, benefit both themselves and all around them; for nothing so edifies others as the gentle endurance of ill-treatment." Father Maffei relates of a certain Jesuit missionary in Japan that one day as he was preaching a malicious man approached and spat in his face. The Father quietly wiped the filth away with his handkerchief, and went on with his sermon as if nothing had happened. One of his hearers, impressed by the action, was immediately converted to Christianity. "A religion," he said, "that teaches such humility must of necessity be true and from God." St. Francis de Sales also converted many heretics by his patient endurance of insult. St. Bernard was one day speaking of a Religious who was looked upon as a saint. "I think that he is a holy person," said the saint,

"but the best is still wanting to him—and that is persecution and opprobrium."

Let us remember that persecution and humiliations are the treasures of the saints. St. Paul writes: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). Our Saviour Himself declares: "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John xv. 20). Smarting under persecution, some one may cry out: "I do my duty, I injure no one, I try to be good to all; why do they treat me so?" O beloved soul, remember that all the saints bore persecution, that Jesus Christ, the Leader of all the saints, deigned to suffer persecution. And you can not endure it? "Can God bestow upon us a greater grace," says St. Teresa, "than to allow us to be treated in the same manner as His well-beloved Son?" If you are despised and, as it were, trodden under foot, rejoice and thank your divine Spouse for admitting you to share the treatment that He received here on earth. At prayer imagine all kinds of contempt, contradiction, and persecution that could possibly happen to you; then, when you have thoroughly weighed them, offer yourself to God to suffer all for the love of Jesus. In this way you will more readily accept them, with the help of God, should they really come upon you.

The Saints received contempt not only with meekness and resignation but also with joy and satisfaction. The venerable Father Louis da Ponte could not in the beginning comprehend how one could rejoice at being contemned. But when he had arrived at greater perfection, he understood it very well from his own experience. We can not, indeed, attain such a state of detachment from self by our

own strength, but we can do so by the grace of God, as the Apostle tells us: "They, indeed, went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts v. 41). Many suffer contempt, but few rejoice in it. On a certain occasion St. Ignatius of Loyola appeared to St. Magdalene of Pazzi and said: "True humility consists in rejoicing in all that can serve to humble us." Worldlings do not rejoice so much over honors as the saints do over contempt and contumely. When the holy Franciscan, Brother Juniper, was insulted in any way, he used to hold up his habit as if he were gathering precious stones in it. When St. Francis Regis was ridiculed by his brethren, he rejoiced, and tried to prolong the laugh against him. The saints were content and even desired to be forgotten and despised by men. They longed to suffer and to be contemned for Jesus Christ. Our Saviour with a crown of thorns upon His head and a heavy cross upon His shoulder once appeared to St. John of the Cross and said to him: "John, what do you ask of Me? What do you desire?" The saint answered: "Lord, to suffer and to be despised for Thee," as if he would say: "Lord, my Saviour, if I see Thee through Thy love for me enduring such pain and ignominy, what else could I ask of Thee but suffering and contempt?" St. Thomas Aquinas says: "When you see one who desires honors and flees abjection, and who when meeting persecution or contempt is troubled and complains, be assured that even should he work miracles, he is far from perfection; his virtue is without foundation." The Angelic Doctor abhorred honors and praise. Clement IV. offered him the Archbishopric of Naples. He not only declined the honor, but obtained the favor from the

same Pontiff that he would never offer him any other dignity. It was through pure obedience that he took the degree of Doctor. He rejoiced when in college that one, whose master he might have been, but who had been given to him as a teacher, called him the *dumb ox,* attributing his silence to ignorance and want of talent. One day, while reading publicly during dinner, he was ordered to pronounce a word in a different manner. He repeated the word immediately as he was told, though he was sure it was wrong. "It matters little," said he afterward to one of his companions, "to make a syllable long or short; but it is of extreme importance to be humble and obedient." St. Angela of Foligno once received this instruction from Our Lord: "The surest proof that the light or inspiration a soul receives comes from God, is the great desire she has to suffer humiliations for the love of Jesus." In His Sermon on the Mount Our Blessed Saviour teaches us not to be troubled at contempt and persecution, but, on the contrary, to exult in the thought of the reward laid up for us in heaven on that account: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for My sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven" (Matt. v. 11).

CHAPTER XXVI.

Purity of Intention.

PURITY of intention consists in doing all things with the sole desire of pleasing God. The intention and the end give to every work its real value, as the Holy Scriptures say: "The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome. But if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome" (Matt. vi. 22). By the eye, the saints understand the intention with which an act is performed, and by the body, the action that follows the intention, as the body follows the eyes that lead it. The divine Saviour intimates by these words that the intention gives light and luster to the action, hence the action will be good or bad according as the intention is good or bad. "If the root be holy, so are the branches" (Rom. xi. 16). As the root, so the tree, so the fruit. What can be expected from a decayed root and a sapless trunk but tasteless, worm-eaten fruit? But if the root is sound the whole tree will be beautiful, the fruit good. So the goodness and perfection of our works depend on purity of intention, which is, as it were, the root. The purer and more direct the intention, the better, the more perfect the action.

Men value actions according to their outward appearance, but God regards the intention with which they are performed. Holy Scripture assures us that Almighty God, unlike men, looks at the heart, that is, at the intention with which we act. "Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart" (1 Kings xvi. 7). Is there anything more

sublime than the death of a martyr who sacrifices his life for the true faith? But St. Paul says: "If I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 3). To give one's body to the flames, and not to do it for God, would be of no use. The Holy Fathers say not the pain, not the death, makes the martyr, but the cause, the reason of their suffering. The Royal Prophet says: "I will offer up to Thee holocausts full of marrow" (Ps. lxv. 15). The sacrifices of some are without marrow, that is, without the intention of pleasing God alone. Such sacrifices He does not accept. St. Magdalene of Pazzi says that God rewards our works according to the measure of their purity, or in proportion to the purity of our intention. It is said of the spouse in the Canticles: "Who is she that goeth up by the desert as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?" (Cant. iii. 6.) By myrrh is understood mortification, by incense, prayer, by spices, all the other virtues. The spouse is praised for them all, for, like a cloud of sweet-smelling incense, her daily actions ascend straight to God, because her only intention in all that she does is to please her divine Bridegroom.

St. Magdalene of Pazzi often said to her nuns: "In all that you do, never seek self." Do you know what you do, asks the Prophet Aggeus, when you seek self in your actions? You imitate him who puts the money received for his labor into a bag full of holes: "He that hath earned wages, put them into a bag with holes" (Aggeus i. 6); that is, he loses the fruit of his toil. Our Lord warns us: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them" (Matt. vi. 1), for if you do, I

shall, when you ask for your recompense, say to you: "You have received your reward. You have gained the praise that you sought. What more can you desire of Me?"

Let us now consider the signs by which it may be known whether our works are done for God or for self. The first sign is not being chagrined when our undertakings do not turn out well. Peace of soul attends every act done with a pure intention, that is, for God alone. We may know that we work for God if, when we find that He permits our failure, we at once submit tranquilly to His holy will. He will not consider the success of our work, but only whether we have sought to please Him. Another sign of a good intention is, that we rejoice as much over the good done by others as if it were done by ourselves. He who seeks only the glory of God cares not by whom it is promoted. But if we do not rejoice at the good effected by our neighbor, if there arises in our heart a feeling of uneasiness or envy, it is an incontestable sign that we do not purely seek God's honor. St. James expressly says: "If you have bitter zeal, and there be contentions in your hearts . . . this is not wisdom, descending from above, but earthly, sensual, devilish" (James iii. 14). Such zeal, such anxiety, are not for the glory of God, but only for one's own glory, for honor, and esteem.

It is, also, a sign that one labors for God alone if he has no preference for this or that office or employment, but contents himself with what obedience imposes. The source of this indifference and equanimity of soul is found in the resolution to see only the will of God in all things. If you do not undertake a fatiguing office with as much readiness as an honorable and less laborious one, you plainly show

that self, and not God, is in view. "If God were always the pure end of our desires, we would not so easily become confused by the resistance of our senses," says Thomas à Kempis.

A fourth sign is whether you wish your Superiors to notice what you do, to thank you for the trouble you take in the discharge of your duties. Do you desire to be praised by them or to receive proofs of their satisfaction? Do you become disheartened if you do not get them? If this is the case, take it as a sure sign that the love of God is not the principle of your actions, and that human motives underlie them. Did you act purely for God's sake, you would care nothing for such praise. On the contrary, convinced that your Superiors express satisfaction through compassion for your imperfection and weakness, you would be ashamed of yourself, you would bemoan yourself, saying: "Ah! I am so weak that my Superiors have to treat me in this indulgent manner. Am I, indeed, so ignorant, so little advanced in virtue, that I have to be urged on by such means?"

In *The Spiritual Meadow* it is related of Abbot John the Younger, of Thebes, a scholar of St. Amon, that for twelve years he served an old sick Father. During all that time he performed his duty carefully and charitably, but never received one kind word from the invalid. He was, on the contrary, treated very harshly. When the old Father lay at the point of death, he called the young man who had served him so long and with so much patience and humility, pressed his hand, and said to him: "May God bless and protect you!" Then, turning to the hermits, who were present, he commended him to them, saying: "Love him; for he is worthy of your esteem and affection. For twelve years he

has served me in my sickness. Never did he receive from my lips a friendly word, and yet never has he ceased to serve me with love and fidelity."

If, on hearing yourself praised, vainglorious thoughts arise, bidding you rejoice in the commendation, do not be troubled; simply give them no heed. Do as Father Avila recommends—say to them: "You come too late; all is already consecrated to God." If you undertake some good work, or if you observe your Rule and perform your spiritual exercises very conscientiously, be not restrained by fear of praise on account of the good example you give, but persevere in such acts, doing them solely for the love of God. God is pleased that others should behold our good actions that they may be encouraged to imitate and glorify Him in all their works: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16). All depends on our acting with a good intention. If vainglory tries to insinuate itself, let us say with St. Bernard, who was tempted in this way once when he was preaching: "I did not begin for you, and I shall not stop for you." We must, indeed, be deaf to the praise of men, but we must not omit our good works through fear of vainglory. St. Teresa says: "If we seek to please God alone, He will supply us with the strength to vanquish vainglory."

The more we forget self in the good that we do, the more God loves us and the more grace He bestows upon us. He Himself revealed this to St. Catharine of Sienna: "My daughter, think of Me, and I will think of thee." Think only of pleasing Me, He meant to say, and I shall take care that you increase in virtue, that you gain the victory over

your enemies, that you attain perfection in this life and the joy of the blessed in the other. The spouse in the Canticles says: "I to my Beloved, and His turning is toward me" (Cant. vii. 10).

Would that all Religious were animated by the spirit of that woman whom a certain Dominican Father in the retinue of St. Louis, king of France, happened to meet in the Holy Land. In one hand she carried a pail of water; in the other, a lighted torch. When asked what she meant by it, she answered: "This water is to extinguish the fires of hell, and this torch is to burn up heaven, that henceforth neither the fear of the one nor the hope of the other may lead men to serve God, but that they may do all things simply for love of Him, to please Him alone." This is truly to imitate the blessed in heaven, who seek naught but the good pleasure of God. As St. Thomas says, they rejoice more over the felicity of God than over their own happiness. This is that "entering into the joy of the Lord," the fulfilment of those blessed words which will be addressed to every soul on its entrance into heaven: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21). St. Bernard says that a soul acts perfectly only when she forgets self entirely, and thinks of pleasing God alone in everything she does. It was in this spirit that he prayed: "Lord, grant that I may love Thee not for myself, but only to please Thee, and to fulfil Thy most holy will!" Well known is St. Francis Xavier's hymn of love: *"O Deus, Ego amo Te":*

My God, I love Thee, not because
I hope for Heav'n thereby:
Nor because they, who love Thee not,
Must burn eternally.

"Souls that love God," says St. Francis de Sales, "purify and adorn themselves not to be beautiful, but only to please their divine Spouse. The confidence which they place in the goodness of their Beloved frees them from all unrest and solicitude as to whether they are beautiful enough, and it makes them satisfied with a sincere and constant effort to please Him." Let us imitate the divine Saviour, when He exclaimed: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46). After that there remains but to die the death of love. Let us die to self that Jesus alone may live in us. Let us pray with St. Francis of Assisi: "O Jesus, grant that I may die to self for love of Thee, who hast vouchsafed to die for love of Me." If we strive simply to do the will of God, if we aim only at His good pleasure, we shall not fail in any work. We can not in any way give more honor to God than by doing His will. This was what our divine Saviour always did. He constantly fulfilled the will of His eternal Father, as He Himself frequently testified: "I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John v. 30). And again: "I do always the things that please Him" (John viii. 29). Justly, therefore, may it be said of Jesus: "He hath done all things well" (Mark vii. 37). "If we act in the same way," says St. Chrysostom, "and succeed in pleasing our good God, what more can we ask?" God does not demand great things of His creatures, but only that the little they can do be offered to Him with a pure intention. If you are closely occupied with the duties of your state of life, you must not be troubled at not being able to spend much time in prayer. When Father Balthazar Alvarez, being very much engaged one day, was longing to give himself up to prayer, he heard an in-

terior voice saying to him: "If thou canst not stay near Me, let it suffice that I make use of thee."

It is recorded of one of the Fathers of the desert, that before every action he was wont to pause an instant. When asked the reason, he answered: "Every action not performed with a good intention is valueless. When an archer shoots at a target, he pauses to take aim before he discharges his arrow. So, at the beginning of my work, I direct my intention to God, who ought to be the only end of all we do. It is for this that I pause a little before all my actions." We must do the same. As the archer, in taking aim at the center of the target, closes the left and opens the right eye, that his gaze, being concentrated, may not stray to other objects, so we, too, must close the left eye, that is, have no worldly intention, and open the right to look only on God. In this way we shall not miss the mark, we shall strike the Heart of God. "Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister, My spouse: thou hast wounded My heart with one of thine eyes" (Cant. iv. 9).

On rising in the morning, we ought to offer to God all our thoughts, words, and actions of the day, begging His grace that we may do all for His greater honor and glory. Then, if vainglory should insinuate itself, we may truthfully say: "You have come too late. The work has been given to another." But this first offering must not be the only one that we make. We must, as much as possible, accustom ourselves to begin no work until we have actually referred it to the glory of God. As a mason applies the rule and the square to every stone that he puts in place, so at each of our actions we should apply the rule of the divine will, and offer it for the glory of God. And as a skilful workman is not satisfied with applying the rule only once, but

frequently makes use of the same test, until the stone lies perfectly square, so we must not think it sufficient to offer an action to God only in the beginning, but during its whole continuance we should make frequent little aspirations such as: "Lord, I do this for Thy sake, because Thou dost command it, because Thou dost desire it!"

The masters of the spiritual life make use of the following very apt comparison to explain how our works may be performed in the most perfect manner. As the mathematician, they say, looks only at the size and shape of bodies, regardless of the matter of which they are composed, for that is to him a question of indifference, so must a true servant of God, in all he does, regard only the divine will. Of the matter he must take no notice—that is, he must look neither at the office nor occupation assigned him. Perfection does not consist in that, but only in accomplishing the will of God, and seeking only His glory in all that we do. This is the doctrine of the great St. Basil, and it is founded on that of the Apostle. The life and actions of a Christian have only one aim, namely, the honor of God; for "whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31).

One day the divine Saviour, tired and exhausted, was sitting at Jacob's well and conversing with a Samaritan woman, who had come to draw water. His disciples had in the meantime gone to the town to buy food. On their return they urged the Lord to refresh His strength by taking some of the viands they had procured. But He replied: "I have meat to eat which you know not" (John iv. 32). Then the disciples said to one another: "Hath any man brought Him to eat?" Jesus said to them: "My meat is to do the will of Him

that sent me" (*ibid.*). That must be our food in all our actions, the satisfaction of doing the will of God, in the work assigned to us. The food of the portress and the infirmarian is not different from that of the Superior and the mistress of novices. We must be as contented in our lowly office, whatever it may be, as they are supposed to be in theirs. The fulfilling of the divine will ought to be the principle of all our actions; therefore, we must not think of the greatness nor the insignificance of our work, but only of fulfilling the will of God. We must attend only to what God demands of us. Let the following ejaculation be constantly in our heart and on our lips: "O Lord, I do this for Thee, for Thy honor, and because Thou dost will it!" By the continued practice of this exercise, we shall at last perform all our actions as the Apostle enjoins: "With a good will serving, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. vi. 7). Purity of intention is the true alchemy which changes the basest metals into the finest gold. However insignificant our work may be in itself, it will, by being performed with the intention of doing the will of God, become of the highest value. Since this can be done so easily let us try to transmute everything we do into pure gold—the gold of merit, the effect of divine charity.

Whoever performs his actions for God will live full days, according to the expression of David: "And full days shall be found in them" (Ps. lxxii. 10). By full days are understood those that are entirely consecrated to the good pleasure of God. All other days are empty, and it is to them that the Psalmist refers when he says that sinners die in the midst of their days. Yes, they do not reach even the midst of them, because they have allowed their years to pass uselessly. "Bloody and deceitful men shall

not live out half their days" (Ps. liv. 24). On the same principle the Holy Scripture calls the sinner a child of a hundred years because he lives not like a man, but like a child: "For the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed" (Is. lxv. 20). The wicked will be overtaken by death and snatched away unprepared, hence, their lamentations when death appears, their complaints that it comes too soon, their supplications for delay. Ah! then they want time to do penance. The same may be said of the tepid and negligent Religious. The days of their religious life are very few, long though they may have worn the habit.

The Franciscan annals tell us of an old monk who, to the question how long he had been in the Order, answered: "Not a day, perhaps!" As his interrogator expressed astonishment at so incomprehensible an answer, the monk replied: "I have, indeed, worn the habit five and sixty years, but, computing time by my works, I do not know how long I have really been a Religious." God grant that no Religious will have to say of himself in truth what that good old monk said in his humility! It matters little that a soul has been a long time in a Religious Order, that she has grown old in it. All consists in having lived well in it. What profit to count many years since the day of conversion if no virtues have been acquired? A few days of a pure and holy life are worth more than many years of a tepid and negligent one. Before God, not the days of life, but the days of a good life will be numbered; not the years that have been spent in Religion, but those that have been spent as a good Religious. Holy Scripture affords us a striking example of this in the first book of Kings, when it speaks of Saul:

"Saul was a child of one year when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over Israel" (1 Kings xiii. 1). And yet we know that he reigned forty years, as St. Paul expressly tells us in the Acts of the Apostles: "And after that they desired a king: and God gave them Saul, the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, forty years" (Acts xiii. 21). Why, then, does the Book of Kings make mention of only two years? Because in the records of God only those years are counted that are lived well. The whole of Saul's reign was reckoned in Scripture but two years, because it was only during that short time that he reigned as a just and true king. The holy Gospel tells us that they who went last into the vineyard and worked therein but one hour received exactly the same recompense as they who had labored the whole day. And who can say that it was unjust, since the former by their diligence had in a short time earned as much as the latter in their long day. Let us pause here and reckon up our years in Religion.

Eusebius of Emesa treated this subject very beautifully when he said: "We are accustomed to reckon our present life by years and periods. But do not be deceived, whoever you are, by the number of days you may have spent here since you left the world. Count those only on which you have denied yourself, on which you have resisted evil desires, on which you have taken up your cross and followed Christ, which you have spent without trespassing any rule. Reckon only those that were illumined by the light of religious simplicity, purity, and holy meditation. Of such days, if you can, form your years, and in that way measure the period of your whole life. Tremble lest you hear the reproof given to the Bishop of Sardes: 'And to the angel of the

church of Sardes write: . . . I know thy works, that thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead. Be watchful, for I find not thy works full before my God' (Apoc. iii. 1, 2). Think not that anything is hidden from the eyes of God. He beholds in you what men do not discover. They think you living, and you are dead. You bear the name and the habit of a Religious; you do not possess the character of a Religious. Your works are empty before God—or rather they are full, but only of self. You seek only your own comfort, your own honor and esteem. Begin at once to watch that your works may be full works, your days full days, that you may live a long life in a short time, and lay up merit before God."

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Necessity of a Spiritual Father, or Director, and of Obedience to Him.

Some Religious are under the impression that they can dispense with a spiritual director. Having their Rules and Superiors, they deem these all-sufficient. In this they err. It is of the highest importance that they should have a spiritual director, as well for their interior guidance as for their exterior. "It is true," says St. Gregory, "that some saints have been led directly by the Spirit of God, but such examples are much more to be admired than imitated, lest he who scorns to be the disciple of a man may become a teacher of error." All virtue is found in the golden mean. As in the spiritual life, inertness is a vice, so is too great zeal harmful. It is the duty of the confessor to put both the one and the other in order and, therefore, his guidance is necessary. But should it happen that a soul can find no such director, God Himself takes the case in hand. Nevertheless, it is certain that the soul who refuses the guidance of God's servant when she can have it acts presumptuously, and God will permit her to make many mistakes. Almighty God could, indeed, lead us Himself, but He wills, for the sake of holy humility, that we submit to His servants.

Cassian tells us of a certain hermit who, dying of hunger in the desert, refused the food charitably offered him, in the thought that God Himself would send him food miraculously. He died in his vain hope and obstinacy. But why, it may be asked, did

God for so many years send bread by a raven to the hermit Paul, and yet neglect the need of that poor monk? The reason is evident. St. Paul was utterly destitute of food, while the other would not accept what was offered him, therefore God abandoned him. What is here said of food for the body may equally be applied to the nourishment of the soul. He who despises the guidance of the wise does not deserve to be guided by God. Obey your confessor, or spiritual guide, and never deviate a finger's breadth from what he permits or forbids, however good your own contrary desires may seem to you. We read in the ancient Fathers of a youth who had made great progress in virtue. Against the advice of his spiritual director he determined to abandon community life, and become a hermit in the desert. But what happened? After leading his new life for some time, he conceived the idea of visiting his relatives. He did so, and not only entirely forgot his solitude, but even gave himself up to sin. We find many similar examples in the writings of Cassian and St. John Climacus. Spiritual men, much given to prayer, even far advanced in years, were wofully misled by confiding in their own judgment, and fell into many follies and excesses by allowing it to guide and govern them.

Obedience and submission of judgment will safeguard you against excessive zeal and evil inspirations. If restrained in your inclination for penance and mortification, you will lose nothing by obeying your spiritual director. On the contrary you will increase your merit twofold, for you will have that of your good desire and that of holy obedience. The latter is often greater than the former, on account of the self-denial practiced. This was made known to St. Bridget, who had an extraordinary

love for penance. Her health being somewhat impaired, her director forbade for a time some of her austerities. The saint obeyed, though not without regret, fearing that her spiritual life might suffer some loss in consequence. One day, while indulging such thoughts, the Blessed Virgin appeared to her and said: "See, my daughter! Suppose two men desire to fast on a certain day through devotion. One of them, being free, really does so; but the other, living under obedience, does not, because he has been forbidden by his Superior. The latter receives a double recompense: one for his desire to fast, the other for his obedience."

But suppose your director has guided you badly —indeed, you have been assured of it by other directors. We reply: You can not easily go astray if you are obedient. If things have turned out badly, as you say, it is perhaps because you have been obedient in some points, and not in others. God is not bound to bless so faulty an obedience. You should leave yourself entirely to the guidance of your director, firmly resolved to obey him in all things. Then God will not permit you to wander in the wrong road. If your director fails in knowledge, God will supply for it. It is impossible for a soul earnestly sighing after perfection, a soul who trusts in God, to go astray if she steadfastly perseveres in obedience to the director He has given her.

A great servant of God was accustomed to say: "Every confessor is alike to me, for every one applies to the wounds of my soul the precious blood of Jesus Christ." A devout Religious once said to her fellow-Sisters: "Be convinced that no confessor can render you holy if you are not resolved to mortify your own will and passions."

Be very candid with your confessor and let him

look deep into your heart, so that he may direct you aright and help you to advance in the way of perfection. He will put himself to any trouble to help you, in return for the confidence you repose in him.

Useless talk ought not to find an entrance into the sacred precincts of the confessional. To what end does it serve to talk so much of one's little aches, annoyances, and disappointments? If these details were omitted, confession would occupy but one-half the time, and there would be a more earnest striving after perfection. Some regularly take about seven and a half minutes repeating the same old tale: "I accuse myself of having little love for God, of not rightly fulfilling my duties, of not loving my neighbor as I should," and so on. Such accusations are to little purpose. They are pure loss of time.

Guard against saying anything derogatory of the confessor. Such expressions are as harmful to yourself as to him. Religious should honor their spiritual guides as their greatest benefactors, but at the same time they should absolutely suppress any special liking for him. They should speak to him only of matters of conscience. "The proper love for a confessor," says a certain saint, "consists in commending him to God in prayer." St. Teresa gave the following advice to her Sisters: "After you have confessed your sins, received absolution, and listened to the counsel given by the confessor for the good of your soul, leave the confessional at once, since it may easily happen that, by long conversations, an inclination for the confessor takes possession of the heart, which, if not actually bad, is not perfectly good." Business affairs, temporal concerns, family discussions, should be absolutely excluded. As to gifts of any kind they ought to be utterly abolished. If once or twice a year some ac-

knowledgment is given the confessor in the name of all, that ought to be quite sufficient. No word should ever pass between confessor and penitent expressive of special liking on either side.

It may be alleged that there is nothing to fear, since the confessor is a very holy man. Let us hearken to St. Thomas Aquinas: "The more holy the persons for whom we feel special attachment, the more must we be on our guard, for the great regard we have for their sanctity will inspire us all the more to love them. A spiritual friendship may easily degenerate into sensual affection."

If a Religious has a true desire for greater perfection, let her apply herself more earnestly to spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, the more devout reception of holy communion, the observance of the Rules and other regulations of the community.

In an article on the ordinary confessor of nuns,* Father McNicholas, O.P., says: "In the convents of Sisters the confessional should not be placed in their sacristy nor in any room of the house; but in the church of said convent or monastery. If the Sisters have merely a private chapel, that is, a large room in the interior of the house, as are most of the Sisters' chapels in the United States, the confessional should be placed in the chapel proper. Sisters who do not wish to submit to this prescription may have their confessions interdicted.

"Only one ordinary confessor is to be appointed for a community. This is a wise provision. Were there several regular confessors, it would mean various ideas of direction in the same community, thus causing comparisons to be made, giving rise to reports and theories and trifling difficulties which

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would tend to disturb the consciences of the Sisters, militate against the unity of the community and thereby interfere with the exercise of the Superior's authority. While uniformity of direction is to be desired, it is not to be overestimated. Were all advanced in the way of perfection and superior to human considerations, especially the personality of confessors, the Church would probably insist absolutely on one regular confessor. But she takes into account human weakness, and, guided by facts, she knows the difficulty so frequently experienced by Sisters of making always a clear manifestation of conscience to the regular confessor. To obviate this difficulty she prudently does not appoint a second or third regular confessor who may come to the convent to hear confessions, but she institutes two other classes of confessors to whom the Sisters may have access, *viz.*, the special and the extraordinary confessor. The confessor should not concern himself about the temporal administration of the convent. He may of course give advice when asked. On the other hand, he should not allow the Superior to give him directions for the guidance of the Sisters in matters of confession. The confessor should receive a stipend according to the custom of the country or place. But other presents he should not accept."

Let us add a few reflections on scruples. A scruple is but a vain fear of sinning, a consequence of false imaginations that have no reasonable foundation. Such scruples are often very useful in the beginning of conversion. They purify the soul, and at the same time make her careful to flee from real sins. They serve, also, to humble the soul, so that, no longer trusting her own judgment, she submits to the guidance of her spiritual director. St. Fran-

cis de Sales says: "The fear that scruples bring to those that have only lately abandoned sin, is an infallible sign of future purity of conscience." On the contrary, scruples are hurtful to those already striving after perfection, and who have for some time given themselves to God. "To such souls," says St. Teresa, "scruples will be the occasion of folly, since they present to them all kinds of preposterous fancies, which put them into such a state that they can take not one step in the path of perfection." St. Francis de Sales teaches the same when he says: "Labor with care at your perfection, but guard against uneasiness; for there is nothing that so hinders the soul in her advancement toward God."

Some discrimination must, however, be observed with regard to anxiety of conscience. Many Religious pride themselves on having an easy conscience. They are anything but scrupulous; they are careless in their dealings with others, they give and take presents without troubling themselves about permission, they set little value on their Rules, declaring that they are obsolete, and they give full freedom to eyes, ears, and tongue. They think little of mortification, and condemn those that aim at death to self. The low voice and downcast eye they brand as affectation and singularity; and they readily associate with the lax and imperfect, finding pleasure in their vain satisfactions. Such souls must not pride themselves on their liberty of conscience. They are tepid, imperfect, undisciplined. Would to God that they had a timid, that is, a tender, delicate conscience, such as every good Christian should have. Let them be on their guard lest they be numbered among those of whom David says that

they will one day be in hell with their wretched companions, whose bad example they followed like sheep. She who will not waste her time by gossiping in the parlor, who will not speak unnecessarily in the choir, who observes silence at the times and in the places marked for it, who scorns a falsehood, does not give signs of a scrupulous, but only of a tender conscience; and this Almighty God demands of every Religious.

The marks of a scrupulous conscience are as follows: First when, in confession, the penitent always fears a want of true contrition and firm resolution. Secondly, if the penitent, on vain and insufficient reasons, fears sin in everything he does; as, for instance, when he imagines every bad thought or evil suggestion a voluntary transgression of God's holy law. Thirdly, if in his doubts he is changeable, looking upon the same action sometimes as allowable, again as forbidden, and that with great fear and anxiety. Fourthly, disobedience to the confessor based on the pretext of being misunderstood. The scrupulous love to follow their own will.

It does not belong to the penitent, but to the confessor, to determine whether or not the former is suffering from scrupulosity; for all scrupulous persons declare their scruples no scruples, but real doubts and sins. Were they to recognize them as scruples, they would make no account of them. They grope alone in the dark, not knowing the state of their conscience. The confessor, viewing things from an independent standpoint, knows it very well; consequently, the penitent should follow his counsel. As Father Alvarez de Paz says, "he should mistrust himself, renounce the direction of his own conscience, and confide himself to better

hands, as the sick man leaves to the physician all the wisdom, judgment, and foresight necessary for his case."

The devil is accustomed to harass souls walking the path of perfection by scruples and anxiety of conscience. As a result, in many cases the spiritual life becomes distasteful, tepidity follows, and from scruples they lapse into great sins. A scrupulous person must obey simply and blindly when the confessor commands something to be done or left undone. Disobedience in such cases is sinful for two reasons: First, because the soul that disobeys does herself much harm, inasmuch as she renders herself unfit to advance in the spiritual life; and secondly, because she runs the risk of losing her health or her mind, or by a vicious life her soul itself.

The teachers of the spiritual life give various remedies for scruples, but all may be summed up in this, the chief, yes, the only remedy, submission and blind obedience to the confessor united with entire distrust of self-judgment. To refuse assent to the directions of the confessor shows pride and a want of faith. Jesus Christ has declared that whoever hears His priests, hears Him, and he who despises His minister, despises Him: "He that heareth you, heareth Me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke x. 16).

Almighty God demands no account of what is done in obedience. St. Philip Neri inculcated this on his penitents when he said: "He who would make progress in the way of perfection must submit unreservedly to a pious and learned confessor, and obey him as the representative of God. Whoever does so may be sure that he will not have to render an account to God of his actions." A blind man needs a faithful guide, and the scrupulous soul, in

her state of darkness and perplexity, must follow the guide whom the Lord has given her; she must allow herself to be led by the hand of obedience.

He who obeys can not err. It was in obedience that the saints found their security. St. Augustine gave his friend St. Paulinus, who had communicated to him some of his doubts, the following advice: "In your doubts consult a pious casuist, and what the Lord makes known to you through him, communicate to me." We see by these words that St. Augustine held for certain that God would speak to St. Paulinus by the mouth of a spiritual guide, and thus make known to him His divine will. St. Antony tells us that a certain disciple of St. Bernard was so tormented by scruples that he was afraid to say holy Mass. In his distress he went to his saintly director for advice. The latter answered him in few words: "Go, my son, and say holy Mass at my peril." The Religious obeyed, and from that moment all his scruples vanished.

Beloved soul, do not reply: "Yes, if I had a St. Bernard for confessor, I, too, would obey blindly. I should love to do so. But my confessor is not a St. Bernard." No, he is not, perhaps, a St. Bernard, but for you he is more than St. Bernard. He is the representative of God. Hear what the learned Gerson replies to such an objection: "You err when you so speak. You have not intrusted yourself to the guidance of a human being because he is holy or learned, but because God Himself has appointed him your guide. You must not obey him as a man, but as God Himself. Then you may be sure that you will never go wrong." St. Ignatius of Loyola, in the beginning of his conversion, was so troubled by darkness and scruples that he could find no rest. But firmly confiding in

the word of the Lord: "He who hears you, hears Me," he exclaimed, full of confidence: "Show me, O Lord, the way by which I should go; I shall obey the guide whom Thou wilt give me; I promise henceforth to follow him faithfully." And so it happened that the saint, on account of his faithful obedience to his spiritual guide, was entirely freed from scruples, and became so excellent a master for the conduct of others. St. Teresa says: "The soul must give herself up to the guidance of her confessor, firmly resolved to think no more of her own affairs, but to rely on the words of the Lord, 'He that hears you, hears Me.'" Should the confessor happen to err, the penitent does not err in obeying. Her obedience is always secure. There is, moreover, no need to question the learning of the confessor. It should be enough for the penitent to know that he has been approved by his Bishop. He holds, therefore, the place of God, and the penitent can not err in obeying his injunctions.

The penitent should, also, obey without further reflection on a case discussed with her confessor after it has been settled by him. The more a scrupulous soul reflects on her trouble, the more perplexed will she become. She must be satisfied to walk in darkness, keeping St. Francis de Sales' beautiful words in her mind: "It is sufficient that the confessor assures us that we are in a good way, even if we do not recognize it." And this other: "It is best to walk blindly under the protection of God's providence through the dark and devious windings of this life." A third maxim for the consolation of the soul is: "A truly obedient soul can never be lost." "We must, however," the saint continues, "do everything from love, and not through constraint. We must love obedience more than we fear disobedience."

As we read in De Lehen's *The Way of Interior Peace:* "Scrupulosity is not perfection, it is a failing. It is a weakness for which the soul, far from glorying, should humble herself before the Lord. To wade in conjectures, and to discover sin where sin does not exist, is a mental defect wholly irrational. Such a fault is as fatal as it is ridiculous, and is justly numbered among the greatest dangers to which a soul can be exposed. 'A narrow, scrupulous conscience,' says Gerson, 'has often worse consequences than one that is too broad; for it is a way without an end, it wearies without leading to the desired term—eternal salvation! Discouragement, and too often despair, are its result.'

"The celebrated Archbishop of Cambray adds: 'Woe to those trifling, self-entangled souls that are always in fear, whom fear leaves no time to love and make generous progress! O my God, I know it is Thy will that the heart which loves Thee should be broad and free! Therefore, I shall act with confidence, as the child playing in the arms of its mother. I shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall seek to make others rejoice. I shall enlarge my heart in the assembly of the children of God, and I shall strive to acquire the childlike sincerity, innocence, and joy of the Holy Spirit. Far from me, O my God, that miserable and over-solicitous knowledge which is ever consumed with self, ever holding the balance in hand to weigh every atom! Such lack of simplicity in the soul's dealings with Thee is truly an outrage against Thee. Such rigor imputed to Thee is unworthy of Thy paternal heart.' "

We close this chapter, repeating: "Obey! Obey! and do not make God a tyrant!" God truly hates sin, but He can not hate a soul that heartily detests her sins, and that would rather die a thousand times

than again commit them. God is good; God loves you; O how gentle He is toward a soul of good will! It was this thought that made David exclaim: "How good is God to Israel, to them that are of a right heart!" (Ps. lxxii. 1.) And the Prophet Jeremias declares in the same strain: "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him" (Lam. iii. 25). Our Lord once said to St. Margaret of Cortona: "Margaret, seekest thou Me? Know that I seek thee far more than thou seekest Me." Imagine God saying the same to you in proportion to your love for Him, your earnestness in seeking Him. Cast yourself into His arms as the Psalmist exhorts you to do; abandon to Him all the care of your soul, and be convinced that He will protect you, and extricate you from all your troubles. "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall not suffer the just to waver forever" (Ps. liv. 23). Obey, and banish every fear. Obey and become a saint. The way of obedience is the safe, short road to heaven.*

*For other considerations on this important matter, see Addenda on page 909.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

On the Duties of Religious toward their Superiors and Spiritual Directors.

On the Importance of Candor and Sincerity toward Superiors.

All Religious are familiar with the Decree *"Quemadmodum,"* of December 17, 1890, regarding the manifestation of conscience. It forbids Superiors (as we read in paragraph II), "from endeavoring directly or indirectly, by command, counsel, fear, threats, or blandishments, to induce their subjects to make to them any such manifestation of conscience"—a thing referred to in the preamble as "reserved exclusively to the Sacrament of Penance."

"This, however, in nowise hinders subjects" (as we read in paragraph III) "from freely and of their own accord opening their hearts to their Superiors, for the purpose of obtaining from their prudence counsel and direction in doubts and perplexities, in order to aid them in acquiring virtues and advancing in perfection."

Father de Langogne, O.M.Cap., commenting on this Decree says: "After, as before, the existence of this Decree, the Superior of the community has a mission and a duty to direct his subjects in regard to the exterior observance of the Rules and usages, and in regard to the employment given to each of them. He can, therefore, for this purpose, watch, inform himself, question, provide, and correct. In this regard the Decree has not changed an iota. On

the other hand, the Superior ought not to question, but listen to his subject, who freely and spontaneously desires to open his heart and make known his doubts and inquietudes with a view to his spiritual progress. The Superior, we say, ought to listen to his subjects who come to ask advice from him. In fact, the inferior is free to recur to his Superior or not. But the Superior is not, therefore, free to listen or send him away. He is Superior, he is director, to aid, to console and enlighten. A systematic refusal on his part would be at once a serious negligence in his office and a lack of charity." *

The better a Superior knows a subject, by being permitted to look deeply into her heart, the more carefully and lovingly can she guide, console, and encourage her; she can ward off many dangers and troubles from her soul by not placing her in such positions or giving her such charges as would expose her. Knowing a Sister's inclinations, weaknesses, and affections, she can better give her a mother's care; she will then impose nothing that surpasses her strength; she will apportion to her the duty suited to her ability; she will help her to cultivate self-control and sustain her in her failures. Contented and happy is the Religious who is perfectly honest and candid with her Superior. The relations between them should be those of mother and child; then there would be mutual love, confidence, and helpfulness. To make another comparison, a Religious ought to approach her Superior as one goes to a true and faithful friend, to open one's heart, to unburden one's soul, to tell one's dangers and perplexities, to seek protection from one's own weaknesses, to find consolation and strength in the trials of life. A Superior can not act as a

**Manifestation of Conscience,* pp. 78, 79.

friend toward a subject who is not candid and sincere; she can not thoroughly sympathize with her, help her, counsel her, guide her.

But a Superior should be a friend to her subjects. Was not Christ the friend of His disciples? Did He not say very plainly to them: *"Jam non dicam vos servos. . . . Vos autem dixi amicos."* "I will not now call you servants. . . . But I have called you friends" (John xv. 15). Was not Christ even the servant of His disciples? Did He not say to them at the Last Supper: "You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is the apostle greater than He that sent him" (John xiii. 13-16).

Is not a Superior *"servus servorum Dei,"* "the servant of the servants of Christ"? Is not a Superior *"alter Christus,"* "another Christ" in relation to his subjects?

Religious should recognize in the Superior the person of Christ. This does not mean that a Religious is merely the consecrated slave of an absolute and irresistible dictator. No; it means, as St. Paul says: serving from the heart, as to the Lord and not to men. These are the express words of the great Apostle, writing to his converts, the Colossians: "Obey in all things your masters, not serving to the eye, as pleasing to men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God. Whatsoever you do, do it from the heart as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance. Serve ye the Lord Christ" (Col. iii. 22-24).

A Superior who is truly Christlike, a servant to

the servants of God, a self-sacrificing and unselfish friend to those whom the Lord has committed to her care, will be approached by her subjects at all times and in all circumstances with love, candor, sincerity, and confidence. Incalculably great is the good that follows when a Religious acts with candor and sincerity toward her Superior, and looks upon her as a faithful friend to whom she may go with simplicity of heart and perfect trust. The Wise Man declares: "A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality" (Ecclus. vi. 16). No remedy is so quick to heal the wounds of the body as is a faithful friend to console in trouble, to counsel in doubt, to rejoice in success, to compassionate in misfortune. "A faithful friend is a strong defence: and he that hath found him, hath found a treasure. Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend, and no weight of gold and silver is able to countervail the goodness of his fidelity" (*ibid.* 14, 15). Blessed indeed is the Religious who possesses such a friend in her Superior. Such a Superior has the heart of a mother who truly compassionates her children. Confidently have recourse to her, according to the advice given us by the Holy Ghost: "And if thou see a man of understanding, go to him early in the morning, and let thy foot wear the steps of his doors" (*ibid.* 36). It is a relief, a consolation, to tell everything to the physician; and so, also, to the Religious, is it a solace and alleviation to share her interior trials and desolation with the one whom God has provided for that special purpose.

One of the best means for driving sadness from the heart is to confide the cause of it to another. The ancient Fathers recommended this remedy. As long as men shut up within themselves the burden of temptation and trial, they live in sad-

ness and perplexity, in desolation and discouragement. But when the burden has been shared by another, the heart grows light, and heavenly peace returns. St. Dorotheus says, that by revealing his interior sufferings to his spiritual Father, he gained such peace and joy of heart that he began to fear that all was not well with him. He was troubled when he recalled the words of the Apostle: "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 21), and he felt doubtful as to whether he was really on the road to heaven. He consulted his master, the Abbot John, who told him not to fear, for he was now enjoying that joy and peace promised to those who deal openly with their spiritual directors. Act with simplicity toward your Superiors, for there is question not of temporal interests, which are secondary, but of your sanctification and eternal salvation. It behooves all Religious, whether Superiors or subjects, to cultivate the spirit of Christ. When subjects talk of rights toward Superiors, they must at the same time speak of obligations; for both go together.

It is the obligation of a Religious to follow Christ, to be moved by His spirit, to be, like Him, meek and humble of heart, to be poor in spirit, to be detached from creatures, to avoid particular friendships, above all to be obedient, ay, obedient even unto the death of the cross, to obey, with a good heart and cheerfully, even a Superior who is not gentle and amiable, solely and simply for the love of God, not through inclination, esteem, or natural affection. As regards obedience under the yoke of one who is severe and commands in a haughty manner, there may be much suffering, but there is then also much merit. It is then that the virtue of holy obedience shines forth in all its

glory. "Where there is less of the creature there is more of the Creator," says St. Jane Frances de Chantal. A fervent Religious, one who is inflamed with the love of God and eager to advance in holiness, sees in each command, nay, in the slightest wish of her Superior, a step by which she can mount higher toward the summit of perfection. After the example of her divine Spouse, whose meat it was to do the will of His heavenly Father, she offers herself with joy as a living holocaust to God, as a victim of perpetual sacrifice, crucified every moment of her life on the cross of obedience. Having followed Jesus crucified, she shall hereafter follow Him triumphant. This is her hope; this is her consolation. "Our seed has fallen in submission," says St. Cyril; "it will rise in glory."

In the little book, *General Principles of the Religious Life* (Meer-Verheyen), we find the following admirable reflections and admonitions on the conduct of Religious toward their Superiors:

1. When the Superior has been elected, do not regard him as one subject to imperfections, but as God's representative. God intends to supply the defects of those whom He appoints in His stead, and He will reward all Religious who honor Him in their Superiors as if the reverence they show their Superiors had been directly shown to His Godhead. On the other hand, He will visit with severity those who fail in reverence to Superiors, and will regard offences thus committed as if they directly concerned His majesty. All history, ancient and modern, proves that this is God's uniform way of dealing. "The disrespect shown to a country's representative is referred to the commonwealth he represents, and the law stamps the act as high treason."

2. Always be prompt and cheerful in obeying your Superior. Do not obey him because of his wisdom and prudence—this is the obedience of human policy, which in a Religious is disgraceful; not because of family prestige—this is the obedience of a low, servile instinct, whose highest aim is to flatter; not because he has the power to force you—this is the abject obedience of a slave, who fears the lash; nor yet because he humors you and imposes agreeable tasks—this is the obedience of a capricious child, that deserves a frequent switching. No, obey your Superior simply because he holds the place of Him to whom you have made the sacrifice of your will. This is true monastic obedience, and the only obedience on the part of a Religious that meets with God's approval. The truly obedient have their eyes fixed only on God.

3. Have great confidence in your Superior. Let your relations with him be cordial and your dealings sincere. In your common necessities, therefore, go to your Superior with as much confidence as a child goes to its parent; look upon everything he orders as well done, though it run counter to your feelings, unless you plainly recognize it to be a sin. To live thus is to live the life of a true Religious, whose way to heaven is straight. That rule of life is unerring for the truth of which God gives the pledge of His infallible word.

4. Take it in good part if your Superior makes you aware of your shortcomings; and that he may admonish you the more readily, beg him earnestly to do so, and love him most who does you this favor most freely. You would certainly have more affection for a parent who could not bear to see the least speck on you without making you aware of it, than for one who neglects to draw

your attention to the filthy stains with which you are covered. A Religious who takes kindly to correction will soon be perfect; but he that hates it will never get out of the ruts of his evil habits. Take care not to complain of your Superiors, and do not listen to those who are given to grumbling about them. To grumble would be a sad misfortune. Had Eve turned a deaf ear to the tempter's wily speech when in her presence he criticized God's command not to eat of the forbidden fruit, she would have had less to suffer, and not have plunged us into the danger of losing our soul. It is God's wish that you should try to please your Superior more than others, mindful of Him whose place he holds; but God expressly forbids you to flatter him, studiously to endear yourself, with a view to be welcome in his company, and to insinuate yourself into his good graces by fawning, informing, or uncharitable tale-bearing. What a disgrace it is to meet certain persons in the monastery who make it their business to court the favor of their Superior, thrusting themselves into his presence, prying into his leanings, to satisfy them in everything, thus to obtain the more easily what they are after! Alas, that sordid egotism can not content itself with its myriads of slaves out in the world, but must recruit its selfish horde in monasteries, where the freedom of the children of God alone should hold empire!

5. Hold in grateful remembrance all that have once been your Superiors, and, though they are no longer in office, retain a special veneration for them. But you must not let it interfere with the confidence you owe your present Superior, through whose means God now confers His grace on you, as before He bestowed it through another. If you observe

another course of action and allow yourself to be directed by those no longer in office, you adopt a course that will divide you against yourself, bring on a thousand complications, and ruin the Order. A two-headed body is a short-lived nondescript.

6. If with God's permission you happen on a Superior who, from caprice, suspicion, or false report, makes it a point to humble you on every occasion, do not fail on that account to show him the respect due to his office. Think of Him for whose love you accepted the yoke of obedience. Be your aversion what it may, overcome it bravely, calling to mind the terrible sufferings of Jesus Christ, when He saw Himself so shamefully maltreated by the Jews, forsaken by His apostles, condemned to death, and so utterly abandoned by His Father; and do not give way to the slightest misgiving as to God's powerful aid. "You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations; and I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom" (Luke xxii. 28).

7. Have compassion on Superiors who, on the one hand, have to assist their subjects all they can, and, on the other, have to give an account to God for their perfection. Pray for them, that God may give them the strength and prudence necessary to fulfil their arduous duties well, and do not make their responsible position more burdensome by heaping upon it the additional dead weight of your irregularities and evil propensities. It is a cold and cruel heart that can bear to see a parent bending under a heavy burden, dragging himself along wearily, with groans and tottering steps, without moving even a finger to relieve the crushing strain.

8. God's best gift to an Order is good Superiors. Since the welfare of an Order depends chiefly on the Superiors, be careful, when there is question of elec-

tion, that you do not be influenced by personal motives or the suggestions of weak human nature. On the contrary, invoke the Holy Ghost that He may enlighten you, implore the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of the founder of your Order, of the guardian angel of your monastery, of all its former members who are now in heaven, that you may choose the one who is fitted to promote the sanctification of souls in your community. "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep" (John x. 11).

9. As to the qualities which should guide you in the choice of a Superior, give your vote, 1st, To the one who is most humble, and least desires the office; 2d, To the one who is in closest union with God, and takes least notice of himself; 3d, To the one who shows most love for the members of the Order in general, and little if any private friendship; 4th, To the one who displays the most zeal for the Order, and gives minutest attention to all the community exercises; 5th, To the one who is most prudent in the management of business affairs, and is least inclined to have intercourse with people in the world. All these qualities may not be found united in a single person; choose, then, the one who has most of them.

10. Look upon your Order as a wise and merciful arrangement of the Holy Ghost to lead souls to perfection. Often speak of the special favors it has received from heaven, and of the excellent services it has rendered to God and man by the prayers and labors of so many of its saintly members, who ended their days happily within its pale. Encourage yourself to imitate their example. A child that stains the luster of his family name, or squanders the estate, deserves to be held up to lasting reproach.

11. If you notice an abuse creeping into your

community, do not complain of it, or speak of it to such as are helpless in the matter, but report the case to those who can provide a remedy. If, for some reason, you can not act, take refuge with God. Be the matter what it may, He is much concerned about it, because the community is His creation, and He can preserve it if He wills it. The blame of a conflagration rests with him who does not hasten to extinguish the first spark.

12. Daily implore the divine mercy to bless your Order by keeping its members in their first fervor, and directing to its fold such as will maintain and transmit the primitive fervor in its full vigor. Prayer for the maintenance of primitive fervor is the best proof of worthy membership.

Reflection.

Why is it that a number of houses, once zealous and well established, little by little fell into decay? The calamity must be ascribed chiefly to three causes: the want of vigilance on the part of Superiors, the neglect of mortification, and free intercourse with the outside world.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Counsels and Reflections for Superiors.

An exceedingly heavy and perilous cross is laid upon Superiors along with the dignity of their office. A very holy ecclesiastic once wrote to his sister after she had become Superior of a convent: "My dear sister, I most fervently beg God to help you, that you may not succumb under so many crosses, that you may not become a martyr without merit or crown." Reflect that you must give an account before God if, through your negligence, irregularity creeps in, or if the Rules are not observed. A good old Carthusian used to say that the Religious Orders decayed more from headache than from gout, that is, more from faults of the head than from those of the feet, since faults come more often from Superiors than from subjects, because those in authority close their eyes to disorders and irregularities. Before entering on your office, thank your Sisters for the honor and confidence shown you. Then tell them openly that you accept the office only to render them service, but in no way to risk your own soul. Tell them courageously that you are resolved to permit nothing, or to connive at nothing by which your conscience might be wounded. Such a declaration will prevent subjects from asking anything unreasonable or unsuitable, and will pave the way for a refusal in case such demands are made. By pursuing this course you will be able to discharge your duties with greater freedom of conscience.

Pay strict attention to the observance of the

Rules, and try in every possible manner to abolish disorders which, if once introduced into the community, can rarely be rooted out. Father Francis, a Discalced Carmelite, relates that an abbess appeared after death to one of her fellow-Sisters, and told her that she was suffering untold pains in purgatory on account of her carelessness in regard to the observance of the Rules, and her neglect of certain orders given her by the prelate of the diocese. A Superior, moreover, is obliged to visit the different parts of the convent, diligently looking after everything and seeing that her orders are executed, for of what use are orders if not carried out? It is better, consequently, to give few orders, and have them attended to, than many and allow them to be neglected. Be solicitous that every one fulfils the duties in her charge, but avoid meddling too much in the offices of others. Another point to engage your constant watchfulness is to guard against particular friendships springing up between the Religious themselves, or between them and seculars.

Long sermons are not necessary, but duty obliges you to speak earnestly against faults committed in the community. That your subjects may keep the Rule exactly, you must lead the way by your own good example. St. Joseph Calasanctius says: "Woe to the Superior who urges on her subjects in beautiful discourses, but who draws them down by her bad example!" Be most diligent in assisting at all the exercises of the community, especially at the community prayer, since you are more in need of prayer than all the rest. You need a double portion of celestial nourishment, since you have to provide not only for your own soul, but for the souls of your subjects. Try always to be present in choir and in the refectory, for disorders easily creep in. Take

particular care never to permit yourself anything extra either in food or clothing. Direct the officers to take no more care of you than of the least in the convent. Govern your community with a firm hand, but ever bear in mind the meekness of our divine Master toward His chosen companions. He has told us Himself of His manner of treating them: "You know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they that are the greater exercise power upon them; it shall not be so among you, but whosoever shall be the greater among you, let him be your minister and he that will be first among you shall be your servant. Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister. I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." There you see the whole conduct of your divine Saviour. He was as a servant waiting on those whom He had chosen.

Avoid favoritism. In the distribution of the offices of the convent, guard especially against human respect or natural inclination, and let Christian prudence mark your conduct, for you will have to render a strict account to Almighty God for the disorders that arise through your fault. Be cordial and humble toward all. Do not forget that you have been made Superior to be the servant of all. By humility and sweetness, and not by haughtiness and arrogance will you gain the hearts of others, and then your admonitions and corrections will be taken in good part. If the Superior is not gentle and affable in her bearing, subjects lose confidence in her. They can not communicate to her their wants and sufferings, they cease to ask the permissions prescribed, and they do not make known, perhaps, certain little disorders in the community. The government of such a Superior would

be a failure. Do not say: "My heart is good; I mean well." If you treat others roughly, you will be avoided. You must lend a friendly and patient ear to all that come to you; otherwise many a little disorder will exist in the convent, which (not having cognizance of it) you can not remedy. Does some Sister shun you? Encourage her to confide in you by showing her some special attention. If you have to distribute offices, impose tasks, or prohibit something, do not command under obedience, unless in some great necessity, and that rarely happens. Avoid intemperate peremptoriness, also too loud a tone. Say what you have to say graciously and in the manner of a request, as, for instance, "I beg you to do so and so," "Do me the kindness," "Grant me the favor," etc. In short, try to be more loved than feared. "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner" (Luke vi. 31).

Especially in administering correction, you must be exceedingly mild. St. Ambrose says: "A kind correction, which simply calls attention to the fault, is more profitable than a violent reproof which excites anger." St. Chrysostom says: "Are you really desirous of your brother's amendment? O then beseech him, admonish him with tears! Cast yourself at his feet—be not ashamed even to kiss his feet if you sincerely desire to see him cured." Administer corrections, especially the first, with mildness and in private. But if the fault deserves and demands public punishment because publicly committed, even then admonish the delinquent first in private. Begin by praising her good qualities, and then proceed to show her the fault of which you complain; and lastly, beg her not to be discouraged even if you are obliged, for the good of the com-

munity, to give a public correction. O how far more efficacious are admonitions given in this way than those marked by brusqueness and severity! If the Superior is mild and gentle, she can lead her subjects by a silken thread. They will be absolutely devoted to her, and they will follow her with the most cheerful alacrity. Your Sisters look upon you as their mother. You must associate with them as a good mother does with her children. The aged and the infirm deserve special consideration. Entreat them in a gentle manner to correct their faults. You could say to them, for instance: "You know that I think a great deal of you, and I beg you to be more careful in the observance of such or such a Rule. The old must give good example to the young," etc. Sometimes you must watch your chance for days and even weeks to catch a suitable opportunity to give a correction with greater profit. Medicine, administered at the right time, restores health to the sick; while the same given at the wrong time brings death. Many things must be left to Almighty God, and recourse must be had to prayer that He may remedy the evil. If, however, certain faults of individuals have evil consequences in respect to the community, if, for instance, they disedify others, annoy and burden them, or detract in any way from the observance of the Rule, then, indeed, the Superior must speak plainly and act energetically. In regard to certain evils, such as particular friendships or enmities, there must be no delay. The remedy must be applied promptly, for the longer such disorders last, the more difficult is it to banish them. Corrections must, indeed, be given with great mildness, but what can not be cured by gentleness must be attacked rigorously and severely. As the Apostle says: "Reprove, entreat, rebuke!"

(2 Tim. iv. 2). The Rule of St. Augustine says the Superior ought to command both fear and love: love in the humble and docile, fear in the haughty and obstinate. A certain pious writer says that there are some who have hearts enclosed in leather armor. They are insensible to everything but the thrust of the lance. Neither kind nor harsh words effect anything. Sharp penances must be inflicted on them if they have committed grave faults. Not to fail in the delicate and difficult task of correction, you must go to work cautiously. Severe penances are like red-hot iron, burning out that which can not be removed in any other way. Furthermore, you must follow the rule of prudence, which forbids your acting in the matter before you have commended yourself to God in prayer, and taken counsel of others. Take care not to impose penances or to give severe reproofs when in a state of excitement. A penance would be of no avail if the subject performed it in anger. You must wait till passion has subsided on both sides. If the reproof must of necessity be severe, mingle a little oil with the vinegar, by telling the delinquent that you love her and act only for her good. If a report has been lodged against any one, do not at once resort to reproofs and punishment. Inquire into the affair, listen to what the accused has to say, and weigh both sides maturely. Only after such deliberation should a Superior act. Things the most innocent are often seen in a very false light, and little infractions are sometimes reported as great faults. Some Superiors, unfortunately, believe all that is told them, and act like blundering physicians, who fail to make a careful diagnosis before they apply their remedies. They act hastily; they cut without necessity. Much pain and trouble may arise from such ill-advised precipita-

tion. May God preserve Superiors, during their government, from exercising revenge on any Sister who has opposed their election, and from being unkind to those for whom they feel a natural antipathy. As regards requests for special favors and exemptions, weigh the permissions that you are called upon to grant, and resolutely reject all human motives, such as friendship, gratitude, etc. To give permission for what would be injurious to a soul would be folly and not charity.

With regard to food and clothing, be as generous as the Rule allows. If the convent is poor and able to supply but little, see that that little is well prepared. It is better to provide the Sisters with abundant clothing, a generous and wholesome diet, and sanitary surroundings, for the preservation of their health and strength, than to erect a stately marble chapel or an imposing convent for the gratification of vanity. Let special care be taken of the sick. Let them be well served with medicine and nourishment and all the reliefs that can be procured for them. Our Lord commanded St. Teresa in very precise terms to nurse the sick well. The infirmarian ought to be a trained nurse and well informed with regard to modern hygiene, therapeutics, and surgical methods. In many cases of sickness, good nursing is of greater importance than medicine. Let the Superior visit the sick Sisters frequently, but let her not appear before them with a lugubrious countenance. A Superior coming to the infirmary with a bright face, a cheerful greeting, and a word of sympathy, exerts a healthful and invigorating influence on those who are sick and depressed. Cheerfulness is a better tonic than medicine.

The foregoing kindly counsels are amplified and

reinforced by the following practical reflections from *General Principles of the Religious Life:*

It would betray a most lamentable ignorance of your duties if you did not know that you ought to have even more care for your subjects than for yourself. Now that you stand to them in the place of Providence, you are bound to provide for all their wants in proportion as they have disowned self, renounced everything, and resigned themselves into the hands of God, their Heavenly Father. In respect to bodily health and the sanctification of their souls, you must assist them as you would your brothers and sisters, love them as if they were your children, and honor them as specially devoted servants of Jesus Christ, Who has given them in your charge, and will one day exact a close reckoning from you on their account. The shepherd's reward, the welfare of his flock, and the owner's profits—all depend on the shepherd's care and watchfulness.

Consider that the three most excellent of persons that ever had charge of the children of God—Moses, Jesus Christ, and St. Peter—displayed very extraordinary affection. Be guided by great gentleness. When you have an order to give, do so in an humble tone of voice, which strikes the ear more like a request than a command. If you grant favors, do it with kindness. In case of a refusal, let the petitioner feel that you are sorry not to be able to oblige him. And as to reprimand, let it be administered without arrogance, harshness, or other passion. The meekness of a Superior sweetens the bitterness of a command.

Keep before your mind that terrible vision in which the Superiors of a celebrated Order appeared in fire, and acknowledged that they had all been con-

demned to that punishment because of their unfortunate, yielding temper. They had, in fact, left the discipline of the monastery to the discretion of the Religious, and in order to please the members had let the body go to ruin. Therefore never tolerate the violation of a Rule or sacred custom. If you notice that gentleness does not avail to keep a Religious well up to his duty, season gentleness with severity. Jesus, the mildest of men, once gave St. Peter a stern rebuke; He often censured His apostles with emphasis and even rigor, and never recalled the severe strictures which He uttered against the Pharisees. Besides plenty of healing salves, a good shepherd must have a little caustic handy for use in case of need.

A Superior's most necessary virtue is prudence—not the criminal prudence of time-serving policy, of which St. James speaks, the sole aim of which is to ingratiate itself and to let the term of office pass by pleasantly without thought of the future, but that supernatural virtue under the guidance of which a Superior employs every available means to make his subjects better, examines the character of each, and takes into consideration each one's necessities. Like a skilful physician, this kind of prudence prescribes remedies in accordance with the patient's disposition and the nature of the ailment: always ready, when necessary, rather to cut off a gangrened member than to let the whole body become infected. Often ask Heaven for this virtue, for it is not a growth of earth. Prudence is as necessary for a Superior in managing his community as a rudder is for a seaman in guiding his ship.

In distributing the various offices, keep your eye fixed, not so much on satisfying the expectations of the members, as on promoting the welfare of the

community. Before assigning the offices pray that the Holy Ghost may enlighten you to know who are best qualified to assume them and will best fulfil their duties. When you have made the choice as God directed you, examine from time to time how the places are filled. In this particular imitate the example of a prudent field-officer, who does not depend on his guards and subordinate officers to the extent that he does not at times make personal inspection to see if every one is faithful in his duties. While a Superior may not appear suspicious, he must not relax in vigilance. One scabby sheep is sufficient to infect a whole flock.

As to the reception of visitors, this should take place only in the reception room or parlor; but you must be fully satisfied that the visitor is not an objectionable person, and that he makes but short and infrequent calls. The Religious who receives such calls must not in consequence of them become less punctual and obedient, nor less charitable to his fellow-Religious, nor fall a prey to spiritual demoralization. If, however, the visitor is a stranger to you, calls too frequently, or protracts his stay longer than necessary and the Religious becomes remiss in God's service, obeys less promptly, is less restrained in his ordinary intercourse, becomes haughty and overbearing, then do not hesitate a moment, but cut off these visits without delay. He is a bad shepherd who does not beat off a prowling wolf.

A Superior would be guilty of a very fatal mistake if he allowed himself to be biased by a first report. He must incline to no decision till he has heard all the evidence in a case necessary to arrive at the truth. It is a most severe trial for an inferior to find his Superior's mind so prepossessed as to make it useless for him to present a statement.

Without doubt the most painful strain on a guiltless person is found in just such a state of things, and it requires more than common grace to bear it cheerfully. Therefore, hold judgment in abeyance; and before you come to any definite conclusion endeavor quietly to obtain a complete knowledge of the facts in the case. A judge who takes the evidence of one side only will seldom give a just decision.

You will surely direct your community with success if you possess the respect, love, and confidence of your subjects. You will gain their respect if your virtues correspond to your position; if you first lay hand to difficulties and burden yourself with what is most repugnant to nature. You can certainly rely on their love if they see that you have equal solicitude for all, but especially for the sick, the aged, and those who have little concern for themselves or their affairs. You will enjoy their fullest confidence if you manifest a sincere affection for them and maintain a scrupulous silence on matters that they intrust to you. Respect, love, and confidence are the ties that firmly bind subjects to their Superiors.

If all your Religious feel satisfied under your management—a case possible only when all are earnestly striving after perfection—thank God for the happy condition, but give Him alone the glory. If, however, you have discontented Religious under you, console yourself with the thought that even St. Benedict, though filled with the spirit of all the just, had to live with brethren who could not bear him; that his great disciple St. Bernard had a secretary, a Religious named Nicolas, who persecuted and calumniated him; that St. Francis Assisi was greatly worried on account of Brother Elias; nay, that Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the very ideal

of a perfect Superior, had to bear with the traitor Judas, who injured Him more than any one can possibly injure you. Consider that a cross-grained, discontented Religious acts the part of a rasp in the hands of a goldsmith, with which he scrapes off the slag from the nuggets of gold, or serves the purpose of a besom which rids the house of rubbish and dirt. A humble and zealous Religious is an edification for the members of a community; while a proud and unstable member offers both his Superiors and fellow-members frequent opportunities to practice virtue and to lay up an abundance of rare merits.

Have the names of all your Religious handy, and pray for them daily, particularly for such as stand in need of special assistance. Be on the alert for new ways and means which may do good service for their improvement, and never give up the hope of their ultimate amendment. Interest yourself in them and give them such aid and encouragement as from time to time they may require. Sincere and affectionate concern on the part of the Superior soothes interior anguish and diffuses bright sunshine in a clouded soul.

Final Reflection.

The office of a Religious Superior is a more difficult one than that of an army commander; for it is harder to direct men's interior than their exterior. It is, moreover, so much the more dangerous as it is a greater evil to let the soul go to ruin than the body. For that reason, too, the saints were always afraid of an office, and many fled from it as from a dangerous reef on which they might suffer miserable shipwreck. Others accepted an office only by sheer force, and lived in constant dread of damnation; for they knew but too well that God would call

them to account, not only for their own shortcomings, but also for those of their subjects which they might have prevented; however those who assume the Superiorship under constraint may not on that account wish themselves joy, since the responsibility remains the same, whether the office was accepted freely or under compulsion. Nothing in the world presses upon the soul with such utter dead weight as the knowledge of having to account and atone for others; nevertheless the Apostle writing to the Philippians (iv. 6, 13) says: "Be nothing solicitous; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." A Religious—a man in authority and of great experience—once said to the Editor of this book: "Go where you please, out in the turmoil of the world or into the solitude of the cloister, and you will find that everywhere Superiors must contend with recalcitrant subjects. There is always some one who carries a knife in his sleeve. Even the most prudent, the kindest Superior will meet with malcontents and chronic grumblers." To this we say Amen. Therefore it behooves a Superior to cultivate liberty of spirit; to perform her duty with a pure intention, and to remain calm, self-possessed, and patient when God permits things to happen contrary to her inclinations, her efforts, and her expectations. A soul endowed with liberty of spirit seeks only to please God, desires but His love and His grace. Her actions correspond with her prayer to the heavenly Father: "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done." Having done her duty, she is not anxious as regards results. She trusts in God. Her watchword is: *Ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

CHAPTER XXX.

The Contemplative Life.

The Contemplative Vocation.

It happened once, thousands of years ago, that while a tribe of escaped slaves, untrained in war, poorly armed, and encumbered with women, children, and flocks, was marching through a granite-walled valley toward the region selected as its future home, the vanguard was suddenly set upon by a fierce band of natives. During the bloody battle which ensued, the leader of the wandering tribe went aside from the field to the summit of a neighboring hill. To look for the approach of reinforcements? Or to forecast the issue of the conflict? Or in order better to direct the movements of his fighting men? No! He went merely to stand upon the hilltop, and to beg with outstretched arms for the help of the God of battles. His prayer was heard. "And when Moses lifted up his hands, Israel overcame; but if he let them down a little, Amalec overcame. . . . And it came to pass that his hands were not weary until sunset, and Israel put Amalec and his people to flight by the edge of the sword."

As a proof of the power of prayer, this incident, recorded by the sacred chronicler in the book of Exodus, possesses perhaps no special significance beyond many another instance equally well authenticated; yet, as symbolizing the rôle of contemplation in the Christian life, it serves peculiarly well to illustrate a spiritual principle of the first impor-

tance. That prayer possesses a certain practical efficacy and should be employed by every individual laboring to attain an honest end is, of course, a truth admitted by all who recognize the existence of an omnipotent and benevolent God. Yet in its integrity the utility of prayer seems not to be appreciated by all theists, or even by all Christians; and indeed we may assert that the principle of prayer, with all its consequences and implications, is accepted only by those who give definite public sanction to the state of life known as the contemplative. These are a very limited number. For while in theory, and according to the rules of rigid reasoning, approval of the contemplative vocation should invariably accompany sincere profession of belief in the efficacy of prayer, yet, in fact, such approval is a thing distinctively Catholic.

That to commune with God is a most valuable aid to human striving is so palpably evident that no Christian would, or could, ignore it. Setting aside the value which is traceable to the subjective results of prayer, to the psychological stimulus of ardent petition, to the enthusiasm born of concentrated intention—setting this aside, we perceive that man's labors are rendered doubly efficacious when joined with prayer. There is an invisible divine power strengthening the arm that has been lifted in supplication, rounding and deepening the tones of the voice that, a moment ago, was silenced during the heart's still worship. There is a new force, sustaining and cooperating with the man of prayer as he goes about his work, a force that subdues opposition, and wins over the many who held aloof until the irresistible secret stirrings of God's Spirit impelled them to listen and respond. So declare all Christians. Can they speak differently merely

because the question concerns society instead of individuals?

Assuredly not! If prayer is efficacious at all, it avails the community as well as the individual; it possesses social as well as private value; it should be regarded not simply as a general privilege, but rather as a public function also.

In speaking of the social utility of prayer, we mean to insist not on the ethical and esthetic betterment that results from a widespread veneration of holy persons and things, but on the claim of prayer to be accorded an honorable rank as a supernatural yet very real force contributing to the success of every legitimate social enterprise and to the fulfilment of every lofty human aspiration. Our meaning may be best realized, perhaps, by considering the rôle assigned to the Christian's private daily prayer, commonly regarded as an element multiplying the fruit of labor an hundredfold, steeling the frame against fatigue, averting danger, and opening up manifold new opportunities. In short, believers generally concede that by prayer a man is certain to render his life far safer, far nobler, and far richer than it could possibly be otherwise. Were this principle not true, it would be hard to differentiate Providence from blind fate, or from the deist's apathetic God; it would be hard to see how the normal mental attitude of the Christian could be, as it is, one of simple faith and trust in the ever ready help of the Almighty. On the other hand, if the principle is true; if prayer really is a powerful social force; then it should be taken account of, and should be employed, in just such fashion as the Catholic Church proposes.

Who that is a Christian can fairly contend against the Catholic ideal or the Catholic practice? Has not

society, too, its function of prayer? Will not a diviner power be at hand to assist that community whose labors are mingled constantly with strong cries that go forth to the listening God? Has the race no need for deep recesses of worship, for hidden caverns of faith and hope and love hollowed out in the depths of the social heart; for sweet, cooling springs of grace to slake the thirst of the multitudes that struggle in the heat of the day? And what more apt than that certain souls be set apart to fulfil just this purpose; to be the "praying ones" of the community by way of eminence; to besiege heaven violently by word and deed; to relinquish every other duty that this may be accomplished constantly and well?

Here, then, we find suggested a vindication of the Catholic teaching upon the contemplative life, the teaching, namely, that it is lawful and meritorious for some to give themselves over exclusively to lives of prayer. In the case of the souls who are encouraged actually to embrace this state of life, tendency and aptitude have first indicated the nature of their gifts; and then, possessed of a sublime faith in the value of converse with God, they have petitioned, and the Church has allowed, that their time and energy be wholly dedicated to the invisible ministry of the spirit; and the broad seal of divine approval so often stamped upon the career of the royal warriors is now set with unmistakable impress upon the lives of those

"Who only stand and wait."

The student of religions should note that the contemplative vocation is something which no other society—at least no other Christian body—has ever had the sublime audacity to sanction. Yet one can

not resist the conviction that the Catholic ideal is alone consistent, and that the Catholic practice is the intelligent working out of the Gospel's deepest truths. This should be seen all the more clearly by a generation that boasts of its grasp on the luminous conception of society as an organism. For surely society has religious as well as political, economic, and educational functions; and for the carrying on of each of these activities individuals ought to be chosen and groups formed from among those whose talents reveal peculiar adaptability and promise special success in this or that career.

Specialization, of course, does not imply that any single group will absorb the whole of the particular activity for which it has been declared the most fit. Living organs are not constructed on strict mechanical lines. As eye and hand and heart have certain functions in common; so, too, the duties of family and school and state to some extent overlap and trespass upon one another. It remains true, nevertheless, that the energy of each is applied mainly to a particular and specific end, and that private as well as public interests are best consulted when the division of labor is nicely and thoroughly made.

Now, quite in accord with this is the Catholic conception of the contemplative life as a vocation apart, as the state of those who are called to consecrate themselves to a life of exclusive prayer, thus enriching the store of spiritual experience and energy upon which the community may draw, though never in any sense relieving the active laborers of their personal necessity of private and public communion with God. True, under certain aspects, this likening of the contemplative to a specialist may seem more strained than is lawful even for a simile.

Admittedly, it will not throw light upon every case. Still, let us not be too hasty in rejecting it as therefore completely uninstructive. Though exceptions and variations are to be looked for in any order, whether of nature or of grace; though here, as elsewhere, geniuses may arise to transcend our classifications and to baffle our powers of analysis; yet this does not invalidate the assertion that Christian philosophy should recognize the social use of contemplatives. Let us repeat our belief boldly and plainly: the naturally and universally conceived concept of the ideal Christian commonwealth logically dictates the institution of what Catholics call contemplative communities.

Some, perhaps, will feel repelled at the notion that the intercession of others may gain for them what they themselves have not prayed well enough to obtain. But such a notion should startle none who are accustomed to think of Christianity as a mediatorial religion; least of all nowadays, when the newly roused sense of human solidarity forcibly inclines men toward that idea of atonement fundamental in the Catholic interpretation of revealed truth. For truly the principle of vicarious substitution gains new breadth and grandeur when the cloister is looked upon as a divinely efficacious element in the warfare against evil and in the building up of the kingdom of God. Our age has awakened to a new comprehension of the oneness of humanity. We begin now to perceive that the very constitution of the race demands just such a principle of common responsibility, guilt, punishment, and redemption, as that assured by Catholic dogma. We see how not only the first head of the race, Adam, and the second head, Christ, but men in every land and age wield tremendous, far-reaching, and long-lived

influence for good or evil; how, in truth, each one of us incessantly plays the alternate rôles of debtor and creditor in a universal, never-ending give-and-take. Hence we realize that each must be apportioned merit or demerit; each must of necessity partake of the general reward or general punishment. As men struggle up from savagery into civilization; as knowledge and reverence replace ignorance and craven fear; as we move onward by the thousand paths of culture toward purer light and higher life; it is the inalienable prerogative of every human being to share, if he will, in the glory of our common success. The thought is one which wins from us a willing acceptance of weighty responsibilities, and softens our souls with the sense of a new emotion, the glad consciousness of human solidarity.

Will it be denied that in the religious order a corresponding instinct impels the recognition of a corresponding truth? Surely no! And how will this noble aspiration of ours be better satisfied than by the acceptance of the deep-reaching spiritual truth which Christianity formulates in its doctrine of the communion of saints? When fully fathomed, this teaching discloses to us a ceaseless interchange of spiritual energy and merit even here on earth between the members of the Church militant; it tells how the sinner is saved by the prayer of the saint; how the apostolate is linked with the priesthood sacrificing at the altar; how the labors of the missionary in city slum or African jungle reap fruit a hundredfold because united with the pleading cry that goes up from cell and choir whither sinner and stranger alike are forbidden to approach. It reveals to us likewise an explanation of those penitential usages so inevitably dominant in the homes of contemplatives; and again our sense of human unity is

pathetically renewed and deepened as we reflect that the measure of what is lacking to us—the callous, the ungenerous, the cowardly members of the race—is perhaps filled up by the pain that scourge and fast and sackcloth inflict upon those innocent, tender souls who thirst as Christ thirsted to pay the unsatisfied debts of their fellow-creatures.

It may be concluded, then, that all who have any belief whatever in the power of prayer should recognize the contemplative vocation as a valid and socially useful state of life. Some special emphasis might well be laid on the close connection between such recognition and the religious spirit; for we may say that esteem—though not necessarily adoption—of the contemplative vocation is a fairly reliable test of the purity and depth of our religion. And if it be true that those of reverent spirit will esteem this state, it is equally true that none others can esteem it as it deserves. No amount of rationalizing will ever suffice to reveal its full beauty and worth. To be sure, there are certain characteristics of the contemplative life which favor its appeal to the mind of our age. For instance, it is unlikely, nowadays, that a claim to immense power will be disallowed simply because of the claimant's unpretentious appearance. The moderns have learned better than that from their study of the wonder-working electric current and of the infinitesimal bacilli that rule the lives of men and cities. Then, again, the realization of solidarity and the tendency to specialization may, as we have tried to show, predispose minds to a more kindly view of the cloistered life. Yet when all is said, the question remains as to whether or not prayer really has any efficacy at all. Only the spiritual-minded man will answer that it has; and the spiritual-minded man will necessarily answer that it

has. Indeed, his valuation of prayer, and consequently of the contemplative vocation in its own order, will vary in an ascending or descending scale accordingly as his religious sentiment is or is not lively and fervent and deep. And all this serves as one more illustration of the striking harmony of Catholic doctrine, whose every detail supports, and is in turn supported by, all the others. If there be truth at all in Catholicity, therefore, this also is true—that the work of the missionary is made fruitful not only by the hours he himself has spent in prayer, but by the countless holy aspirations that stream up to Heaven daily and nightly from the worshiping hearts of solitary contemplatives.

The reader need expect no attempt on our part, as indeed there is no desire, to prove the views presented any further than they are already established in virtue of necessary connection with truths universally accepted by the Christian consciousness. The starting-point of any vindication of the contemplative vocation must of course consist of a great assumption, namely, the utility of prayer. Except thus imperfectly and by a process devoid of all appearance of finality, the truth in hand admits of no argument, as being of an order outside the narrow circle of what can be proven or disproven. But what can be put forward with all assurance is the affirmation that the Catholic estimate of the contemplative vocation is in perfect harmony with the most fundamental truths of supernatural religion; that it is involved in them; that it is the implicit or expressed tradition of the Christian centuries; and finally, that if it be false, then an overwhelming majority, if not all, of our religious beliefs must be altered, scouted, perhaps utterly rejected.

The Contemplative Apostolate.

The foregoing leads us to a point far too seldom taken into account in the consideration of the subject before us. This is the sense of contemplatives themselves as to the real purpose of their being.

It is commonly thought and sometimes plainly stated that the primary impulse of the contemplative must needs be selfish; that, since he or she flies from the world purely or mainly in the interest of personal salvation and perfection, this action must be prompted by inordinate self-interest, by an egotistic anti-social instinct quite incompatible with the high conception of life as a consecration of self to the betterment of humanity.

Now, as a matter of fact, the charge is based upon an utter misapprehension of the main issue. The contemplative ideal centers around the conception of prayer as a very real means of serving mankind at large. Just as no man embarks upon the stormy career of a missionary chiefly for his own immediate benefit, so no true contemplative enters the silent cloister mainly for his or her own sake. In the one case as in the other it is thirst for souls that forms the great motive. That this statement may not be regarded as an unwarranted exaggeration, let reference be made to a work* written by a Carthusian for the purpose of recalling the significance of their vocation to contemplative Religious, and of exposing the attractive ideal of this life to those souls who are fitted to undertake the task of converting sinners and of perfecting saints by the sole ministry of

**La Vie Contemplative: Son Rôle Apostolique.* Par Un Religieux Chartreux.

prayer. This book lends the whole weight of its authority to the notion just advanced, and says explicitly that zeal for souls rather than any immediate personal benefit *must* be the motive of a contemplative vocation. The author protests vigorously against the supposition that persons enter the cloister to rest with folded arms, to obtain salvation sweetly and peacefully, sheltered from wind and sun, and totally indifferent to the souls that perish outside the convent walls. After reading his exposition, or honestly examining the professed aim and faithful practice of the Orders in question, one grows indignant that people who could easily acquire correct information on the matter should persist in covert insinuations against the motives that draw souls to the cloister. The cynical distrust of the unbelieving, who scoff at all things holy, would scarcely be worthy of our indignation. Far more painful is it when those of the household indulge in open or veiled criticism of the inactive Orders; question their earnestness, their judgment, or their utility; and speak as if to be drawn toward the cloister were to be tempted to loiter in the sweets of contemplation at the cost of giving aid to suffering mankind. Is it true that the contemplative is a weakling seeking shelter? Is it true that the cloister is a more comfortable home than the mission house? Is it right to assume that sufferers are helped by those who labor and not by those who pray? Is it fair to contrast the active and the contemplative Religious by saying that it is easier to pray or to imagine one is praying than to tend the plague-stricken in hospitals? Yet one can not be blind to the fact that, in some measure, precisely these misapprehensions affect some of the faithful, some of the priesthood, and even some Religious vowed to a state of life

meant to be incompatible with so low a notion of the worth of simple prayer.

Unless the whole Christian concept of life is wrong, then much fruit must come of fervent prayer directed toward supplying the needs of the apostle and of the sinners for whom he is laboring. And to this end, as has been said, do the contemplatives really direct their vigils. Were we seeking for practical confirmation of this, for an illustration of the fact that contemplatives really and seriously conceive of their vocation as an auxiliary apostolate, we might well turn to the Carmelites, who, as our author says, "are before all an apostolic Order." Their very motto tells us this: "With zeal am I consumed for the Lord God of hosts"—*"Zelo zelatus sum pro Domino Deo exercituum."* This has always been a characteristic of Carmel from the beginning; and St. Teresa's reform emphasized it. In the opening chapter of the *Way of Perfection,* she states very plainly that she founded the monastery of St. Joseph in Avila, and founded it in special austerity, because of her desire to relieve the Church's miseries and to stem the tide of heresy. How carefully does she teach her nuns that they would be recreant to their duty if they were to lose their time in praying for anything else than what immediately concerned the salvation of souls. "This is your vocation," she says; "this is to be your employment and your desire; to this your tears, to this your petitions tend."

A recent occurrence will serve admirably to evidence both the apostolic ambition of contemplatives and the popular failure to appreciate it. Those of our readers who are familiar with the life of Sister Thérèse, *The Little Flower of Jesus,* will recall how the closing chapter of her autobiography sets

forth her intensest longing to cooperate by prayer in the work of the apostolic priesthood. Among the many lovely pages in her volume, one of the most beautiful is that which records her inexpressible delight at having been chosen to unite her prayers with the labor of a missionary priest. In still another passage her apostolic yearning for souls rings out into this chant of holy aspiration :*

"To be Thy spouse, a Carmelite nun, the mother of souls : should not that more than suffice me? Yet I feel that I have other vocations besides. I would be Thy warrior, Thy priest, Thy apostle, a teacher of Thy law, a martyr for Thee. . . . Like the prophets, like the doctors, I would enlighten the world, traveling in every land, preaching Thy name, O my Beloved, and raising the standard of Thy cross in every heathen place. For one mission would not suffice; I would spread the Gospel everywhere, even to the farthest ends of the earth, and work thus not for a few years only, but from the beginning to the end of time." She wished for martyrdom, too, to be scourged and crucified like Christ, flayed like Bartholomew, plunged like John into boiling oil, ground by the teeth of wild beasts like Ignatius of Antioch, beheaded like Agnes and Cecilia, burned at the stake like Joan of Arc. These unsatisfied cravings tortured her with the sense of helplessness; she could not actually endure all these things, and she suffered at the thought. But at last the real significance of her vocation flashed upon her and in a moment she understood that the Church "must pray and love as well as work;" that, besides external organs, it must possess a heart; and that

**The Little Flower of Jesus:* Being the Autobiography of Sœur Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Translated from the French by Michael Henry Dziewicki.

this heart must be filled with love, for "should that fail, no more apostles would preach, no more martyrs bleed." Immediately her soul found peace. Beside herself with joy at having found this clue to the meaning of her life, she cried out: "O Jesus! I have now discovered that my vocation is—to love! I have found the place which Thou Thyself hast given to me in the Church. Within its heart I shall be love—and thus I shall be all; and what I dreamed shall be realized. . . . All I ask for is love. Let that, O Jesus, be my all. Great deeds are not for me; I can not spread the Gospel, nor shed my blood. No matter! My brothers* labor for me, and I, at the foot of Thy throne, love for them. . . . I love Thee, Jesus; I love Mother Church and know that the least thing done out of pure love is more to her than all other works together." A picture more faithful, a revelation more beautiful of the contemplative's apostolic sense could scarcely be obtained.

And now a word on the common conception or rather misconception of this sublime ideal that reveals itself in the heart of the *Little Flower* as a vision of appealing beauty firing mind and will with sympathy and ardent inspiration. It happens that a reviewer of Sister Thérèse's autobiography has taken occasion, of the very passages now under consideration, to draw out a lengthy comparison of the active and the contemplative vocations. Alongside the *Little Flower's* account of her dreams and aspirations, he places a narrative of the labors undertaken and the privations endured by a Sister engaged upon the foreign missions. "There seems to be a lesson," is his comment, "in this contrast of

*Her "brothers" were two young missionaries in union with whose labors her prayers were offered to God by the direction of her Superior.

two maidens, one of whom is dreaming in her cloister, while the other is laboring under the African sun, amid the snows of the Rocky Mountains, or in a Chinese mission station about to be set fire to by the Boxers. Why should I not communicate that lesson to young girls resolved to give themselves to God, yet hesitating between the two vocations? . . . With Bossuet, I believe that the perfection of the Christian life does not require one to enter a hermetically sealed cloister."

Now it is but fair to state that in other places this writer has shown that his purpose is rather to praise the active communities than to disparage the contemplatives; and he does indeed profess that Carmel is a lofty, beautiful ideal, worthy of the generosity of pure and ardent souls. It may be, too, that in France there is some danger of the contemplative state being unduly exalted, of its being represented as "the ideal toward which the élite of humanity always tends." If this be the case, then our critic's aim is thus far legitimate, and his words, from this point of view, are beyond reproach. Yet one can not ignore his recurring insistence on the superiority of the missionary career as the actual realization of what to the contemplative can never be more than a dream. Against this representation the Christian instinct rises at once in protest. The contemplative apostolate is more than a dream; it is divinely real; it is a mighty force perfectly objective, wonderfully efficacious; and if there be any wisdom in the Gospel counsel, any harmony in the teachings of faith, any sincerity in Christ's invitation to prayer, then surely a soul that enters Carmel may be a most precious factor in the continuing of the ministry of Jesus, in the building up of the kingdom of God.

However it may be in France, in our own land, at any rate, it is good occasionally to insist on this aspect of the matter, and to remind Catholics not of the limitations, but of the divine worth of contemplative Orders. Ours is an age and a people constitutionally impatient of any ideal that excludes practical heroism and lacks visible fruit. Even those who concede, as it were reluctantly, that religion has a higher function than the service of the widow and the fatherless, even these are not content that a state prohibitive of external ministrations should be held up as an ideal for aspiring souls. We are apt to be told over and over that whatever is estimable in the life of the Carmelite or the Poor Clare can be found in union with new treasures in the career marked out for Sisters of Mercy, or of Charity, or of The Foreign Missions; to be warned persistently, almost incessantly, against a too confiding and a too excessive sympathy with the mystic visions that draw souls to Carmel and La Trappe.

No doubt, as long as man remains man, each human being will tend to exalt his or her vocation to the disparagement of others. The hermit will be prone to include his solitude and the missionary his ministry of sacrifice and reconciliation among the necessary conditions of the most perfect state. Dispute on the question will give little satisfaction and no edification; and neither side of such a controversy will be defended here. Nevertheless, it seems not wholly vain to say something by way of comment upon that state of life which those who might be called its natural defenders have so little opportunity to explain.

When we consider the comparative rarity of the contemplative vocation; when we enumerate the common normal obstacles to the choosing and fer-

vent practicing of the cloister-rule; when we realize what peculiar and constant graces are needed for perseverance to the very end; then few of us will be ready to assert that to be a contemplative is easier than to visit prisons and hospitals.

For the more hidden life there is required so wondrous a combination of natural and supernatural gifts that the consideration of them might well dismay the bravest of souls. To the eye of faith all this is at once evident; and one is tempted to believe that there must always be a subtle rationalism underlying the tendency to present as the nobler elements of the religious life those external activities which may be undertaken, and in some measure have been successfully achieved, by mere philanthropists; and, on the other hand, to regard as a lesser thing the practice of that loving communion which is absolutely beyond the reach of the most arduous human striving. A soul filled with faith would employ a very different scale of values. To conceive of the contemplative occupation as a mere luxurious idling in spiritual delights is possible only to a mind so far tainted with materialism as to be out of tune with the sweet harmonies of the divine love-song and densely impervious to the vision of the obstacles against which the soaring spirit of man must struggle incessantly.

It is understood, of course, that the claim for peerless and universal excellence is not going to be transferred from the active to the contemplative Orders. Comparisons have always been invidious; and they become more so every day. Men are gradually rising above that stage of mental immaturity in which they used dogmatically to declare that what loomed largest to them was the biggest and brightest thing in the universe. A fair mind will instantly

recognize the inutility and foolishness of declaring that the contemplative life is "the ideal state;" but equally useless and foolish would be the declaration that it is not. The real concern of each soul that strives to imitate God must be to discover and to embrace the mode of life best adapted to produce in itself a perfect conformity with the divine design. Only of secondary importance, if any, is it for a soul to know where the greatest perfection lies technically and in the abstract; since the one practical and indispensable requisite is a correct discernment and adoption of the means whereby it personally can become what the Creator destined it to be.

Hence it is ungracious and misleading critically to contrast the vocations of Mary and Martha, and to dwell upon the ostensible superiority of the latter in variety of trials and in fulness of achievement.

Such contrast necessarily implies the mistake of venturing to measure hardships by very human and therefore very uncertain standards; for, unless saints and spiritual writers in general be given the lie, then far more exquisite than the torments of martyrdom is the pain endured in the processes of purification and refinement through which souls pass in their ascent to the sacred heights of prayer.

And as to achievements, the same caution is to be observed. If the spirit of faith sanctions anything, surely it guarantees the belief that man's labors are in a sense for the benefit of man rather than of God —since God at wish can send legions of angels to enhance each success, or to retrieve each failure of His servants. Every lesson drawn from the life of the Incarnate God, every observation of our own and our neighbors' lives, forces us to conclude that the efficacy of prayer is beyond all proportion greater than the efficacy of work; and that although

external labor must be undertaken when God so wills, yet it forms no predominant, and even no essential, part of holy living. It is the instinct of the deeply religious heart, as it is the spirit of the Church's practice, to assume that an unmeasured and immeasurable amount of good is effected by souls who do nothing else than pray. In fact this truth, as we have seen, follows close upon one of the most fundamental and most significant of Catholic doctrines, namely, that all are members one of another, that all partake of the life vivifying Christ's mystical body, and that, in a very real cooperation, we all are striving by common effort to attain a common end. So as the hand may not say to the heart, "I have no need of thee," the active shall not say to the contemplative Religious, "I have done more than thou."

True, Sister Thérèse could name no list of souls saved by her ministrations, yet we dare say the young priest whose auxiliary she became could tell of many a marvelous success, many a striking victory of missionary zeal attributed to her intercession; just as the nuns and missionaries of Africa and Oceanica no doubt could relate many an unlooked-for favor referable only to the invisible assisting powers. Of course the connection could not be traced in these cases; nor can the efficacy of such cooperation ever be proven; yet not on that account will the truth of it be less evident to minds appreciative of the fine, mysterious workings of grace, nor will any remain insensible to its appeal except persons by temperament indisposed to all belief in the mystical vocation. But go to the missionary whose voice has been ringing through crowded churches up and down the land these twenty years, and whose hand has set the seal of pardon on thou-

sands after thousands of repentant sinners; speak with the friend of the vagrant, the wayward, the degenerate; question the priest or the nun whose days are spent with Indians, or Negroes, or Chinese, and see if these heroic members of the Christian apostolate have nothing to say of message or letter or visit that is repeated periodically, testifying to their dependence on the cloister, breathing their faith in the apostolate of contemplation, binding them in closest ties of love and gratitude with Carmelite and Dominican, with Visitandine and Poor Clare.

Here are we striving for the conversion of America, with a vigorous army of priests that patrols the continent from end to end, and God is rewarding their efforts with unprecedented success. Oh, for the further blessing to be gained by a keener sense of what prayer can do, by a deeper insight into the significance of the contemplative apostolate! It is told of Mgr. Lefebvre that when, having been made a Bishop in Cochin-China, he proclaimed that his very first action would be the founding of a Carmelite monastery at Saïgon, some one ventured to comment upon this by saying:

"Necessaries ought to precede luxuries in the building up of a diocese."

The Bishop replied:

"What you consider a luxury, is to me the first necessity of the Christian ministry. Ten nuns who pray will help me more than twenty missionaries who preach."

Nothing but a perfectly sublime faith could dictate a response like that. Let similar faith be in the souls of every one of us, of us who have set hearts and hopes upon the Catholicization of our country. When we are beseeching the Lord of the harvest to

send laborers into the whitened fields, at the same time let us beg that He will increase the number of those choice spirits, His precious vessels of grace, who are set apart to spread the light of faith by means of prayer—

> "Souls high on Carmel's hill,
> Yet spent for brothers on the plain below."

To-day our country has a few contemplative houses, a *pusillus grex*. But while nations in Europe are driving forth their Religious into exile, let this land of liberty receive them, let America's arms be opened wide to them in welcome. Then through the length and breadth of the land, and in the depths of each Catholic heart, will be spread the fragrance of fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit, of prayer.*

*Rev. Joseph McSorley, C.S.P., in *The American Ecclesiastical Review,* November, 1902:—"The Contemplative Vocation and The Contemplative Apostolate."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Prayer—Vocal Prayer in Particular.

THE grace of prayer is a universal grace, granted to all men; it is also a sufficient grace, for by it we can obtain every other grace necessary for salvation; it is a grace that is in every man's power; it is also a grace which every man must use if he wishes to be saved—in a word, prayer is the principal sufficient grace granted to all men for their salvation.

Prayer is a real grace, for the power of calling on God for supernatural help is truly a gift of God in the supernatural order, a real help of salvation.

Prayer is a universal grace, because it is in the power of every man who has attained the age of reason and enjoys its use. Prayer is in everybody's power, for prayer is so easy that no one can reasonably pretend that he is unable to pray. Every man can pray, be he rich or poor, learned or illiterate, healthy or sick, strong or weak, young or old, busy or at leisure. "In speaking with God or praying," says St. Teresa, "we need not use many words or choice phrases; all that is requisite is that we remain deeply recollected in His presence, simply stating to Him our wants in our own words, or merely in our thoughts without uttering a single word, and reminding Him of His promise to help us."

Prayer is, indeed, so easy that every one can pray whenever he wishes, not only in health, but even in sickness and in the agony of death; for, as long as the dying retain consciousness, they are able to raise their hearts to God in prayer. Moses burdened with the cares of an immense multitude of an unruly

people, Daniel in the lions' den, the three young men in the midst of the fiery furnace, St. Joseph in his workshop, St. Paul in his dungeon, St. Isidore at the plow and caring for his flock—found time to pray and delighted in doing so. We can, if we wish, imitate them amid our daily occupations, however laborious and distracting they may be in themselves. The grace of prayer is a constant grace, for every one can pray at all times; during the day and at night, as the early Christians used to do, according to the testimony of Tertullian. We can pray early and late, in all places, at home and in church, on land and on sea, in private and in public, in all occupations, whether mental or corporal; in all positions, even in walking and in lying down. God is everywhere present, and is ever ready to listen to our petitions for His help.

Prayer, if well made, is infallible in its results. We can, of ourselves, do nothing for our salvation, for Christ says: "Without Me you can do nothing" (John xv. 5). Since God wills that we should attain a destiny beyond the reach of our natural powers, He must necessarily be willing to grant us His help to attain it, whenever we earnestly pray for it. In fact, says St. Augustine, "God is more willing to grant us favors than we are to receive them." "God is always ready," says St. John Chrysostom, "to hear the voice of His servants praying to Him; He has never yet neglected to hear it when called upon as He should be." The prophet Isaias (xxx. 19) had already said the same thing: "God will surely have pity on thee; at the voice of thy cry, as soon as He shall hear, He will answer thee." "The Lord," says the Royal Prophet, "is nigh to all them that call upon Him in truth; He will do the will of them that fear Him; He will

hear their prayer, and save them" (Ps. cxliv. 18, 19).

We have the formal and solemn promise of Our Lord Jesus Christ that God will hear our prayers and grant us all we ask, for He says expressly: "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you. . . . Ask, and you shall receive" (John xvi. 23, 26). "You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7). God is faithful and just, and will, therefore, surely keep His promise to grant us the graces we need, because we have a claim to them. They are the price of the blood and merits of Jesus Christ, for He died to save us. His merits are, then, ours; and, when we claim by our prayers a share in them or in their fruits, God can not refuse to grant us what we ask.

The Holy Scriptures are full of examples of the efficacy of prayer as a means of obtaining whatever we need to secure our salvation. It was by his prayer that the publican was justified, by her prayer that the Samaritan woman was converted; it was by his prayer that David obtained the forgiveness of his sin, and that the good thief on the cross was converted and received the promise of paradise. We find in Holy Writ also many examples of prayer as an efficacious means of obtaining even temporal favors. It was by prayer that Moses obtained the victory over the Amalecites; Elias obtained rain after a three years' drought; Manassas, his deliverance from prison and his restoration to his kingdom; Ezechias, the prolongation of his life; Solomon, wisdom; Susanna, the proof of her innocence; Daniel, his deliverance from the lions; the blind man, his sight; and the Church, St. Peter's deliverance from prison and death. When we pray, God in some

manner obeys our will, as He obeyed that of Josue when by his prayer he commanded the sun to stand still: "The Lord," says Scripture, "obeying the voice of a man" (Jos. x. 14).

Prayer is, as the Wise Man says, "a shield wherewith to oppose the divine wrath." God is almighty; and yet to this question of the Psalmist, "Thou art terrible, O God, and who shall resist Thee?" (Ps. lxxv. 8) we can answer: "Prayer!" because prayer also is almighty, and in some sense capable of overcoming God Himself. We have a most remarkable example of this in Moses. Holy Scripture thus relates the fact: "The people, seeing that Moses delayed to come down from the mount [Sinai], gathering together against Aaron, said: Arise, make us gods, that may go before us; for, as to this Moses, we know not what has befallen him. And Aaron said to them: Take the golden earrings from the ears of your wives and your sons and daughters, and bring them to me. And the people did what he had commanded, bringing the earrings to Aaron. And when he had received them, he made of them a molten calf; and they said: These are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And Aaron built an altar before it. And rising in the morning, the people offered holocausts and peace-victims, and sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play. And the Lord spoke to Moses: Thy people hath sinned. Let Me alone, that My wrath may be kindled against them, and that I may destroy them" (Exod. xxxii. 1-10). Why should God, who is almighty and irresistible, ask Moses to "let Him alone"—that is, not to interfere with His design of destroying the idolatrous Israelites? What could Moses effect against God? But Moses could pray; and, taking the hint, he did inter-

fere, saying: "Why, O Lord, is Thy indignation enkindled against Thy people? Let Thy anger cease, and be appeased upon the wickedness of Thy people." His prayer met with perfect success, for it appeased God's wrath, compelling Him, as it were, to show mercy. "And the Lord was appeased from doing the evil He had threatened against His people."

Prayer is, then, in a certain sense, almighty, able to overcome God Himself; it is unfailing in its effects, and at the same time so easy as to be in the power of every adult whenever he wishes. "All excuse," says St. Alphonsus, "is taken away from those sinners who pretend that they have not the strength to overcome their temptations, because, if they had recourse to prayer and made use of this ordinary grace bestowed on all men, they would obtain all the strength they need to overcome temptation and save their souls. No one is damned for the original sin of Adam, but solely for his own fault, because God refuses to no one the grace of prayer whereby he may obtain His assistance to overcome every passion, every temptation."

"He who prays," says St. Alphonsus, in another place, "is certainly saved; he who prays not is certainly lost. All the blessed (except infants) have been saved by prayer. All the damned have been lost by not praying; had they prayed, they would not have been lost. And this is and will be their greatest torment in hell, to think how easily they might have been saved, had they only prayed to God for His grace; but that is now too late—for the time of prayer is now over for them." We have just seen how effective prayer is, because it is the infallible means of gaining heaven. St. Augustine is, then, right in calling prayer "the key of heaven."

The necessity of prayer is twofold, *viz.*, as a precept of God and as an indispensable means of salvation. First, as a precept. God repeatedly commands us in the Old Testament to have recourse to prayer: "Cry to Me" (Jer. xxxiii. 3); "Call on Me" (Ps. xlix. 15). In the New Testament Jesus Christ expressly commands us to pray. "Ask," He says, "and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Matt. vii. 7; Mark xi. 24; Luke xi. 9). "Pray, lest you enter into temptation" (Luke xxii. 40 and 46). "It behooveth always to pray" (Luke xviii. 1).

Prayer is necessary for all men as a means of salvation. Even were there no special commandment to pray, we should be obliged to pray in order to obtain the graces and means necessary for our salvation. We need God's grace for every thought and act pertaining to salvation; we are naturally weak and prone to evil, and can not of ourselves keep all the commandments of God. For this we need His special assistance, which, in the ordinary course of His providence, He grants only to those who pray for it, because He will not force His graces on the unwilling, and those who really want them will surely ask for them.

Prayer is necessary for the good, for the just, as well as for the sinner. "After baptism," says St. Thomas, "continual prayer is necessary for man that he may enter heaven." The just man can not practice virtue without prayer, for, says St. John Climacus, "prayer is the source of all virtue; it is the channel through which flow to us all Christ's graces and all divine gifts; it is the best and most indispensable means of advancing in virtue."

The just man, although he is in the grace of God, is nevertheless naturally weak, prone to evil, and be-

set with many temptations from the world and the devil, and especially from his own passions. He can not escape temptation, and without God's assistance he can not overcome it. St. John Chrysostom says: "As water is required to keep plants from withering, so also prayer is necessary to preserve us from destruction. As fire is quenched by water, so are our passions extinguished by prayer."

The same misfortune will befall the just man who neglects to pray in time of temptation as befell St. Peter when he failed to pray according to Our Saviour's injunction. St. Peter loved Our Lord truly and dearly, and, we may say, with a greater love than that of any of the other apostles. And nevertheless he basely denied his divine Master thrice, and not only did he deny Him, but he even swore with fearful imprecations that he knew Him not. How came it that he fell so low, so deeply? It was because he neglected prayer.

At the Last Supper our divine Saviour foretold to His apostles that they would all abandon Him that night, saying: "You will all be scandalized in My regard to-night." "But Peter saith to Him: Although all shall be scandalized in Thee, yet not I. And Jesus saith to him: Amen I say to thee, to-day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. But Peter spoke the more vehemently: Although I should die together with Thee, I will not deny Thee" (Mark xiv. 27-31). St. Peter was very sincere in his resolution to die with Jesus rather than deny Him. But he was weak, very weak of himself; he was warned of this in the Garden of Olives, when, not having heeded the injunction of Jesus to watch and pray with Him, he was thus spoken to by the loving Saviour: "Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation [that

is, that ye yield not to temptation]; the spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. xxvi. 41). St. Peter did not heed this warning; he failed to pray, and when the temptation came he was deservedly left to his own weakness and helplessness, and denied Our Lord in the most cowardly and shocking manner. A sad experience records the fall of many formerly holy personages into degrading vices, because of their neglect of prayer in time of temptation. Had St. Peter prayed, had they prayed, God would have given them most efficacious graces to cope victoriously with temptation. The same misfortune will happen to us, if we, too, neglect prayer in temptation.

Prayer is also absolutely necessary to obtain the most excellent and necessary grace of final perseverance. What will all other graces avail us, if we do not obtain that of final perseverance? But we need, says the Council of Trent, a special grace of God to persevere finally in His friendship and die a good death. But this grace can not be merited even by the greatest saints. No one can claim a right to it. This is a terrible truth; for many who had a long time led a holy life and edified the whole Church did not persevere, but fell into sin and died in sin! But that grace of graces—final perseverance, which we can not merit or lay claim to on account of previous good works, we can surely obtain, says St. Augustine, "by daily prayer." But "we must pray for it daily," says St. Alphonsus, "that we may obtain it for that day." If we neglect prayer a single day we may fail to obtain it, and may then fall into sin and die in sin. But if we pray daily for perseverance, we shall most assuredly obtain it, according to the Saviour's promise.

"All the reprobate," says St. Alphonsus, "have

been lost in consequence of their neglect of prayer; and all the saints have become saints by prayer; had they neglected prayer, they could not have become saints and should not even be saved. I would wish to do nothing else than write and speak always on this great means of prayer; for, on the one hand, I see that the Scriptures, the Old as well as the New Testament, exhort us so often to pray, to ask and cry out if we wish for the divine graces. 'Cry to Me, and I will hear thee' (Jer. xxxiii. 3). 'Call on Me, and I will deliver thee' (Ps. xlix. 15). 'All things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you' (Mark xi. 24). 'You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you' (John xv. 7). 'If you shall ask Me anything in My name, that I will do' (John xiv. 14). There are a thousand similar passages. I know not how the Lord could better declare His desire to bestow His graces upon us, or the necessity we are under of asking them if we wish to obtain them. The holy Fathers also continually exhort us to pray. And to speak the truth, I complain of preachers, of confessors and spiritual writers, because I see that neither preachers, nor confessors, nor spiritual writers speak as much as they ought of the great means of prayer. I have, therefore, written at length on this subject in so many of my little works; and when I preach I do nothing else than say and repeat: Pray! pray! if you wish to be saved."

Prayer, as we have seen, is both easy and effective; and, nevertheless, numerous are the complaints that our prayers are not heard. St. James thus answers these complaints: "You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss" (James iv. 3). St. Augustine says that there are three principal reasons why

our prayers are not granted by God. Some people, he says, are unfit to be heard when they pray, because, far from being agreeable to God, they are hateful to Him. Others are refused what they pray for, because they ask for unsuitable and even for dangerous things. Others, finally, are not heard because their prayers lack some of the qualities of a good prayer. We should pray for temporal favors *conditionally*—that is, under the condition that they either promote our salvation, or at least do not interfere with it; for we should never lose sight of this saying of Our Lord: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.)

"God," says St. Alphonsus, speaking on this subject, "has pledged Himself to grant us, not temporal, but spiritual goods, goods necessary or conducive to our salvation; for we can not ask 'in the name of Jesus' for what is or may prove hurtful to our salvation. God does not and can not grant it. Why? Because He loves us. A physician who has any regard for his patient will not permit him things which he knows will prove injurious to him. Many people ask for health or riches, but God does not give them, because He foresees that they will be an occasion of sin or of tepidity in His service. When we ask for temporal favors, we ought always to add this condition—*if they are profitable to our souls.* And when we see that God does not give them, let us rest assured that He refuses them only because He loves us, and because He sees that what we ask would, if He were to give them to us, redound to our spiritual injury."

The prayers of many persons are not heard because they are wanting in some of the necessary qualities of a good prayer, namely, attention, sincer-

ity, humility, confidence, perseverance, and earnestness. Our confidence in God should be boundless. He is our most generous benefactor, our most loving Father. He has already conferred numberless benefits on us without any merit or prayer of ours. Every moment of our life is marked by His renewed favors toward us. He loves us with a love greater than that of a loving mother for her own darling child, for He says: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee" (Is. xlix. 15). God has solemnly promised to grant us whatsoever graces we ask; and, being almighty, He is able to grant us all, and even far more than we can ask. He is so willing to bestow His favors on us that He complains of our not asking Him for them: "Hitherto," He says, "you have not asked anything in My name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John xvi. 24). God even commands us to ask Him for His favors: "Ask, and you shall receive."

As a pledge of His love for us, God has gone so far as to give us His own beloved Son. "He that spared not even His own Son," says St. Paul, "but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) "In prayer," says St. Anselm, "we speak with God. How attentively and reverentially should we speak with the Lord of lords! How humbly with the Supreme Judge, and how confidently with our best Friend and Benefactor!" "We have every reason to pray with confidence," says St. Peter Chrysologus; "for what will not God give to those who ask Him, since He already gives so much to those who do not ask Him?" "Our confidence," says St. Bernard, "is the measure of the graces which we obtain

in prayer. If our confidence in God is great, we shall receive great graces; if it is little, we shall receive but little." If God has hitherto sparingly bestowed His graces on us, it was owing in a great measure to our little confidence in Him during prayer. Our prayer must be persevering. "God," says St. Gregory the Great, "wishes us so to pray to Him as to overcome Him by our importunities." He usually defers granting our prayers, first, that we may the better prove our confidence in Him by persevering in our request; secondly, that we may desire His favors more earnestly and appreciate them so much the more; and thirdly, that we may not forget Him, for were He to grant at once what we ask, we should be liable not to pray any more to Him until we want some other favor. "God defers hearing our prayers," says St. John Chrysostom, "not because He rejects them, but because He wishes to contrive to draw us to Him. Do not leave off praying until you are heard."

When He had taught the "Our Father," our divine Saviour related the following parable: "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves; because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And he from within should answer and say: Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I can not rise and give thee. Yet, if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet, because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say to you: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you; for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he

that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened" (Luke xi. 5-10). The greater and more intense our desire to obtain a thing, the more persistent we shall be in our efforts to secure it.

We have a beautiful illustration of this in the Gospel. "Jesus departed," says the Evangelist, "into the confines of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Chanaan who came out of those parts, said to Him: Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. But He answered her not a word." But she was not discouraged, for she followed Our Lord, persevering in her prayer, so much so as to cause the apostles displeasure by her importunity. "And His disciples came and besought Him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us. And He answering, said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel." But the woman persisted, for "she came and worshiped Him, saying: Lord, help me. But He answered and said: It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs." This severe rebuke of Our Lord did not discourage her, for "she said: Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters." Her confidence and her earnest perseverance in spite of so many rebuffs were at last rewarded, for "Jesus answering, said to her: O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was cured from that hour" (Matt. xv. 21-28). If we also persevere in prayer as she did, we also shall be favorably heard by God in His own good time.

A lack of perseverance in prayer argues a lack of earnest desire. God, by deferring to hear us, does not refuse our prayers, but will even grant us far more than we ask. Speaking on this subject, St. Jerome says: "God, knowing the weight and meas-

ure of His goodness, sometimes appears insensible to our prayers, in order to try us, to urge us to pray more earnestly, and to make us more holy through constant prayer." *

In regard to *vocal* prayer, as distinct from *mental* prayer, Father Girardey writes:† "Although in itself vocal prayer is not so excellent as mental prayer, we should, nevertheless, beware of underrating its usefulness or necessity. All true Christians frequently recite vocal prayers, such as the 'Our Father,' the 'Hail Mary,' the 'Apostles' Creed,' the acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition. The Church prescribes vocal prayer very strictly to her priests and her Religious, in the Mass, in the liturgy, and in the Divine Office. She has enriched many vocal prayers with numerous indulgences, and has approved of many prayer-books filled with prayers suited to every want and devotion. Vocal prayer, then, is both useful and necessary for all men without exception—even for those who are soaring in the heights of contemplation. In reciting vocal prayers, we should strive to attend to the meaning of the words, appropriating it to ourselves with all possible fervor and earnestness. A few short vocal prayers well said are far more acceptable to God than a great many long ones recited without attention or fervor.

"One of the best forms of vocal prayer is the frequent recitation during the day of some favorite aspiration or ejaculatory prayer, especially if we do so in time of trial and temptation. This commendable practice gradually imparts a habit of recollection, and renders all other prayers comparatively easy and free from distraction. We should, as far as practicable, prefer reciting those vocal prayers

*From *Popular Instructions on Prayer*, by Rev. Ferreol Girardey, C.SS.R. †*Ibid.*

which the Church has enriched with indulgences, for we thereby gain a twofold advantage—the benefit of the beautiful and devout prayers themselves, and the indulgences, which help us to acquit ourselves of the great temporal debt which we have contracted toward the divine justice on account of our numerous sins. Or we may also apply said indulgences, when so applicable, to the souls in purgatory, who will be relieved thereby and will not fail to intercede for us in our wants.

"It would be well to join, to a certain extent, mental prayer with our vocal prayers, for the merit of the latter would be thereby greatly increased. We may do so in this wise. During the recitation of our vocal prayers we pause at short intervals to reflect either on their meaning or on some supernatural truth; or, without at all pausing, we reflect thereon while actually pronouncing the prayers with our lips. The Rosary is the most common and readily understood example of this manner of praying. While we are reciting the 'Our Father' and the 'Hail Marys' of each decade of the Rosary, we meditate or reflect on some mystery connected with the life of Jesus Christ or of His blessed Mother.

"It is also useful, in using the prayers of our prayer-book, to read them slowly and deliberately, making in the meantime practical reflections on their contents, or pausing from time to time to meditate a little and apply the words of the prayers to our own wants. If we accustom ourselves to recite our vocal prayers in this way, we shall not only make them our own and pray well, but we shall also acquire the habit of making mental prayer, which tends to unite us more closely to God, and, through the practical imitation of our divine Saviour's virtues, to render us conformable to Him."

CHAPTER XXXII.

Mental Prayer or Meditation.

The life of a Religious should be one of continual prayer. It is very difficult, yes, it is even impossible for one who does not practice mental prayer to be a good Religious. If we behold a tepid Religious, we may confidently ascribe her tepidity to the want of mental prayer. A soul that does not practice mental prayer is, in the first place, without light, without illumination of the understanding. "He who shuts his eyes," says St. Augustine, "can not find the way home." The eternal truths are entirely spiritual. They can not be discerned by the eyes of the body, but by those of the mind, that is, by the application of the soul to meditation. He who does not meditate does not see, therefore does not understand the importance of eternal salvation, nor embrace the means that lead thereto. Ah, how many are lost because they neglect to meditate upon the great business of life here in this exile, upon the "one thing necessary," as our blessed Lord termed it! "With desolation is all the land made desolate; because there is none that considereth in the heart" (Jer. xii. 11). The Holy Ghost says, on the contrary, that he who has the truths of faith before his eyes, namely, death, judgment, hell, and heaven, will never sin: "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Ecclus. vii. 40). "Come ye to Him, and be enlightened," says the Psalmist, "and your faces shall not be confounded" (Ps. xxxiii. 6). And again, our divine Saviour admonishes us: "Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning

in your hands" (Luke xii. 35). These lamps, according to St. Bonaventure's interpretation, are the lamps of holy meditation. Prayer illumines the intellect. God speaks to the soul in prayer, and His words are light and strength wherein we securely walk in the narrow path that leads to eternal life. "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths" (Ps. cxviii. 105).

St. Bonaventure compares meditation to a mirror reflecting all the stains of the soul. St. Teresa wrote to the Bishop of Ostia: "We may, indeed, flatter ourselves that we have no imperfections; but O how quickly do we discover them when God opens the eyes of the soul, as He is accustomed to do in meditation!" He who does not meditate does not know his faults, and consequently does not hate them, as St. Bernard remarks: "He has no fear for himself, since he is not aware of his danger." Meditation discovers faults and the dangers consequent on them, and with such knowledge comes the eager desire of overcoming them. The thought of eternity animated King David to the practice of virtue and to the cleansing of his soul from vice. "I thought upon the days of old, and I had in my mind the eternal years. And I meditated in the night with my own heart; and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit" (Ps. lxxvi. 6, 7). The Bridegroom exclaims in the Canticles: "The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come; the voice of the turtle is heard" (Cant. ii. 12). When the soul retires into recollection, and speaks to God in prayer, in the prayer of the heart, then the flowers of good desires spring forth; harvest-time follows, the cutting down of the faults which she has discovered by her earnest prayer. "You may think," says St. Bernard, "that the harvest has come when it has been

preceded by holy meditation; for meditation puts our inclinations in order, guides our actions, and repairs what has been amiss."

Secondly, without interior prayer the soul has no power to resist her enemies, the powers of darkness, or to practice the Christian virtues. Meditation is to the soul what fire is to iron. As iron, when cold, can not be forged, so the soul without the heat of divine love, which is generated by prayer, can not be inclined toward God. Subject the iron to the fiery furnace and it will soon become malleable and may be shaped as the smith pleases. The strokes of the hammer make impression on it only when it is glowing with heat. To observe the commands and counsels of Almighty God the heart must be docile and pliable, open to heavenly inspirations, and ready to execute them. It was this that King Solomon begged of God: "Give to Thy servant an understanding heart" (3 Kings iii. 9). Man's heart, since the fall of our first parents, is dull and hard, inclined to sensual pleasures, and opposed to the law of the spirit, as the Apostle laments: "But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind" (Rom. vii. 23). By prayer, by meditation, man becomes enlightened. Divine grace finds him ready. His heart becomes softened, obstinacy and disobedience disappear, and he is saved. "A hard heart shall fear evil at the last; and he that loveth danger shall perish in it" (Ecclus. iii. 27). After Eugenius had become Pope, St. Bernard admonished him never, for the sake of business affairs, to neglect his meditation. "I fear very much for you, my Eugenius, that, if you neglect meditation, the number of your exterior affairs may harden your heart, which then would become insensible to divine inspirations."

Many may think prolonged prayer a loss of time, which might be put to greater profit in good works, in deeds of charity. But let them reflect that it is only in prayer that the soul gains strength to conquer vice and to practice virtue. "From such leisure comes strength," says St. Bernard. The Lord Himself ordered that His spouse should not be roused from her slumbers. "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the fields, that you stir not up, nor wake My beloved, till she please" (Cant. iii. 5). Rouse her not until she herself wills it; for the holy rest, or sleep, that the soul tastes in mental prayer, although quite voluntary, is necessary to the spiritual life. Loss of sleep produces loss of strength. Without sleep a man can neither labor nor travel far. He will fall by the wayside. The soul that does not rest in prayer and, consequently, draw her strength from it, will not be in a state to do good or to resist temptation. She will soon fall in the way. St. Teresa, that great authority on mental prayer, says: "He who gives up mental prayer needs no devil to cast him into hell; for he plunges himself into it."

Almighty God does not give us His grace unless we ask for it; and without the help of that grace we can not keep the commandments. Full of this thought, St. Paul admonishes his disciples: "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. v. 17). We are poor beggars. "But I am a beggar and poor; the Lord is careful for me" (Ps. xxxix. 18). The income of the poor depends on the alms of the rich. Our spiritual income, that is, the gifts and graces of our good God, must be obtained by frequent and humble supplication. St. Chrysostom assures us that without prayer it is absolutely impossible to live a virtuous life. God desires nothing more than to lav-

ish upon us His graces, but He must be petitioned for them. He must, as it were, be forced to give them to us by our prayer.

From this indispensable necessity of prayer springs the moral necessity for meditation. The man who never reflects, who lives constantly distracted by the diverse affairs of this world, can scarcely be alive to his spiritual needs and the dangers that threaten his soul. He is, consequently, ignorant of what means to employ to overcome temptation. As he does not know the necessity of prayer, he does not exercise it; and without prayer he will infallibly be lost. To this some one may reply: "I do not make meditation, it is true, but I say many vocal prayers." To such a one St. Augustine makes answer: "We must petition for grace not only with the lips, but also with the heart." On these words of David, "I cried to the Lord with my voice: with my voice I made supplication to the Lord" (Ps. cxli. 2), the saint remarks: "Many cry to the Lord with the voice of the lips, but not with that of the heart. Your thoughts are a cry to the Lord. Cry interiorly, for God hears you." It is to this that the Apostle admonishes us when he says: "By all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the spirit" (Ephes. vi. 18). Vocal prayer is generally full of distractions when performed by one unaccustomed to meditation, and when it lasts long. God does not hear such prayer, and the favors it asks are rarely granted. A man may recite the Rosary, or the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, or perform many other devotions, and yet continue in the state of mortal sin. But for one who meditates it is utterly impossible to persevere in sin, because he must of necessity give up either prayer or sin. "Meditation and sin can not

exist together," says a great servant of God. Experience teaches this. The soul that diligently meditates rarely falls into disgrace with Almighty God. Should she be so unhappy as to do so, she will soon rise and return again to God, provided she does not relax in her meditation. St. Teresa says that the Lord will surely pilot the soul that has become negligent into the haven of salvation, if she only perseveres in mental prayer. In one word, it was by such prayer that all the saints sanctified themselves. It is the blessed furnace in which souls are inflamed by divine love. "My heart grew hot within me: and in my meditation a fire shall flame out" (Ps. xxxviii. 4). He to whom the soul speaks in mental prayer is Almighty God Himself. "I will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart" (Osee ii. 14). She who does not practice interior prayer is not united to God. It will not be hard for Satan to win her for his own, since he finds her alone and without help against his machinations. How can the love of God live in the soul that neglects to commune with Him in prayer? Where, except in meditation, in mental prayer, were the saints inflamed with divine love? St. Peter of Alcantara was so filled with love during his interior communing with God that he once sprang into the icy waters of a pond to cool the ardor of the fire that was consuming him. St. Aloysius Gonzaga was so inflamed with divine love when he made his meditation that his countenance appeared to be on fire, and his throbbing heart seemed about to leap from his breast. "Meditation," writes St. Laurence Justinian, "puts the tempter to flight, drives away sadness, restores lost virtue, enkindles devotion, intensifies divine charity." Very true is the saying of St. Aloysius Gonzaga that without frequent and earnest meditation or men-

tal prayer one will never attain a high degree of virtue.

The soul that practices meditation, according to the Royal Prophet, is like a tree planted by the running water. It flourishes and brings forth fruit in due time. "Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence. But his will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season. And his leaf shall not fall off: and all whatsoever he shall do, shall prosper" (Ps. i. 1-3). Let us mark the words: "It brings forth its fruit in due time," which means at the time that he has some trial, some sorrow, some contempt to endure. St. Chrysostom compares meditation to a fountain gushing in the midst of a garden. Just as a garden that is freely watered brings forth an abundance of flowers and foliage, so does the soul that meditates present to the eyes of God the pleasing sight of ever increasing virtues. Her holy desires and aspirations are constantly ascending like a sweet odor to heaven. But whence has she received the first seeds of good? From meditation, which daily sheds fruitful dew on her heart. "Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard. . . . The fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, which run with a strong stream from Libanus" (Cant. iv. 13-15). If the fountains of the garden were to dry up, the flowers and foliage would soon wither for lack of water.

So it is with the soul. As long as it meditates, we find in it charity, modesty, humility, and mortification. But let mental prayer be neglected, and vanity,

frivolity, love of ease and worldly pleasures, want of recollection and devotion, neglect of mortification—all these are the result. Water is wanting, the spirit is dried up. "My soul is as earth without water unto thee" (Ps. cxlii. 6). The poor soul has forsaken mental prayer, and the garden of her heart is parched. It grows dryer and harder day by day. St. Chrysostom looks upon such a soul as not only sick, but even lifeless. "He who no longer prays to God," he says, "who no longer desires constant communion with Him, is dead." When the soul ceases to kneel in prayer before God, she dies.

"Meditation," says the same holy teacher, "is the root of the fruit-bearing vine." "Meditation," St. John Climacus writes, "is a bulwark against tribulation, a fountain of virtues, a channel of divine grace." Rufinus maintains that all the advancement of a soul comes from mental prayer, and Gerson declares that he who does not make interior prayer can not, without a miracle on the part of Almighty God, lead a Christian life. St. Ignatius of Loyola says, "Meditation is the shortest road to perfection." He who makes great progress in mental prayer makes great progress, also, in perfection. It is in the time of meditation that the soul is replenished with holy thoughts, devout aspirations and desires, good resolutions, and most fervent love of God. It is then that she lays on the altar of sacrifice all her passions, all her sinful thoughts, her lingering attachments to the world, all that flatters self-love. We can, moreover, in our meditation, gain the merit of many good desires though they never be carried into effect; for God rewards every good desire just as He punishes every evil one.

Let us remark, above all, that we must not meditate with the design of receiving sweetness and con-

solation, but only to please God, and to learn from Him how best to love and serve Him. Father Alvarez says that the love of God does not consist in consolation, but in the faithful and disinterested fulfilment of His commands. He adds that divine comfort is like the refreshment which the traveler takes on his journey, not to delay his progress, but that he may go forward more briskly. If we suffer from want of consolation in prayer, and yet persevere in it bravely, although against our inclination, we may be sure that we are very pleasing to the Saviour, and that we are accumulating merit. "O my good Jesus," we may cry out in our desolation, "why dost Thou act thus toward me? Thou hast deprived me of all things, of my possessions, my relatives, my acquaintances, and my will, so dear to me. I have not hesitated to bid adieu to them all in order to gain Thee. But why dost Thou deprive me of the consolation of feeling that Thou art near me?" Let us address Him in this way, but in the spirit of humility and resignation, for He will then make us understand that all that He does is for love of us, that He wills what is best for us.

We must not neglect prayer if in it we are tortured by all kinds of thoughts and temptations. We must remember that it is at just such times, and under just such pretences of inability to pray, that tepidity and indolence slip in. Such thoughts must be banished as the Patriarch Abraham drove away the birds that settled over the sacrifice (Gen. xv. 11). We must do simply what lies in our power, and then trouble ourselves no further. Our blessed Lady once appeared to St. Bridget when the latter was quite worn out by the temptations that had assailed her in the time of prayer, and thus addressed her: "The devil, envious of man's welfare, tries to

raise all kinds of hindrances to his prayer. But you, my daughter, when tortured by even the most abominable temptations, when you think yourself unable to free yourself from them, persevere firmly in your good will and holy desires. That will render your prayer excellent and very meritorious before God." On the other hand, "when," as St. Jane Frances says, "in prayer, we find ourselves touched with some holy affection, it is not the time to multiply reflections, but to stop, address one's self to God in words of compunction, of love, of abandonment, according as the inclination may move us. This is the best kind of prayer."

St. Cyril shows by comparison how one should meditate. "How does one act who would strike a light? He takes a flint and strikes the stone with a steel until the fire ignites whatever he wishes it to fall upon. In like manner he who meditates should seek by considerations and reflections to touch the heart and to inflame it with the fire of divine charity."

St. Teresa says: "It is very salutary to occupy one's self during prayer in making acts of praise and of the love of God; to form a desire and a firm purpose to please Him in all things; to rejoice in His goodness because He is sovereign perfection; to wish that all would render Him the honor and glory He deserves; to recommend one's self to His mercy; to place one's self simply before Him, admiring His grandeur, humbling one's self at the sight of one's miseries, then to be indifferent as to what He sends us, be it consolations or dryness, convinced that He knows what is best for us. Holy affections should be excited in us. The great point is to love much."

St. Francis de Sales says: "Those souls who are not solidly established in piety walk bravely and are content when Our Lord gives them consolations

during prayer; but if He deprives them of these, they are discontented—like little children who thank their mother when she gives them sweets, and cry when she takes them away, not knowing they are dangerous when taken in large quantities. Sensible consolations engender complacency. This complacency gives birth to pride, which is the poison of the soul and corrupts every good work. Our Saviour lavishes spiritual consolations when we enter the way of piety in order to attract us to Him; afterwards He deprives us of them to try us and lest they might become hurtful to us. Ought we not thank Him as well when He takes them from us as when He gives them to us?"

St. John Berchmans experienced at times, while in prayer, inexpressible sweetness; but he had also days on which his soul was plunged in the greatest dryness. He never lost courage nor became disquieted when in this state. "The whole care of those who give themselves to the exercise of prayer," says St. Teresa, "should be to conform their will to that of God. In this consists the greatest perfection we can acquire here below." To conform in all things to the will of God was the principal object of all the prayers of this great saint.

St. Bernard addressed himself to God in the beginning of all his prayers as follows: "My God, I offer Thee this prayer that I may know how to please Thee in all things; that I may know and do Thy holy will!" As these saints have prayed, so let us pray: Lord, grant that I may know and do Thy will. It is not sweetness I seek, but Thy good pleasure. Dispose of me as Thou pleasest. Give me but Thy love and Thy grace; I desire nothing more.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Importance of Meditation.

Books and Methods of Meditation.

"HAPPY is the man," says the Royal Prophet, "who meditates day and night upon the law of the Lord. He shall be like a tree that is planted by the river side, which brings forth its fruit in season." In meditation the Religious walks with God; by means of meditation she is filled with Christ, and by contemplating Him in her own soul she is made capable of communicating Him to other souls. Sanctifying herself she is able to sanctify others, and to do the work of God in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. St. Paul, writing to Timothy, says: "Attend unto reading; neglect not the grace that is in thee. Meditate upon these things, be wholly in these things, that thy profiting may be manifest to all" (1 Tim. iv. 13, 14, 15).

"Meditation," says St. Augustine, "is the beginning and end of all good," and if this be true of a Christian generally, how much more must it be true of the Religious? The Lord is the portion of the Religious, the Lord is her inheritance, and in order that the value of that inheritance may be appreciated it must be known. Our divine Lord repeatedly invites us to acquire this knowledge of Him. "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet." "Take My yoke upon you, for My yoke is sweet and My burden

light." "Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you." "Meditation," writes Father Godwin, "alone can make God known to us. In meditation we come to learn what God is in Himself and in what relation we stand to Him. We acquire a knowledge of the divine attributes, and that knowledge excites in us deep feelings of awe and admiration for the divine majesty. Prayer of adoration follows spontaneously on these sentiments. We learn how good God is in Himself, and how He has manifested His goodness toward us. Creation, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and all the sacred mysteries connected with it, Redemption, grace, the eternal bliss of heaven, are evidences of the divine bounty. In the contemplation of these great truths we live and walk with God, and are always with Him. Prayers of praise, of gratitude, of love flow naturally from our souls delighted with the vision of God which we attain in His contemplation.

"From this picture we turn to another, and here at once very different feelings are aroused within us. We look upon ourselves, and in the light of God's majesty and greatness we are overwhelmed at the sight of our own contemptible littleness; we behold our many infirmities; we see the terrible heinousness of our continual offences committed against the Infinite God. At first an awful fear seizes upon us; but under the benign influence of grace that servile fear changes into a heartfelt sorrow, and this sorrow breaks forth into a prayer for pardon, and as, suing for pardon, we lift our eyes again to the former vision of God, there steals into our hearts a firm feeling of assurance, and this assurance displays itself in a prayer of hope and confidence. Closely upon this prayer follows the prayer

of trust in God by which, full of diffidence in ourselves, we cast all our care on Him, who alone hath care of us. Resignation to God's holy will is the fruit of that prayer and completes the union of the soul with God, and sets right our relations with Him."

Who shall calculate the importance to the Religious of the faithful performance of this duty? Her sacred calling demands of her a corresponding degree of sanctity. The prayer of meditation is the response we make to our divine Master's loving invitation: "Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you!" The invitation perpetually perseveres. If the Religious daily responds to it; if day by day she reverts to one or other of the considerations mentioned above, gradually going through them all, and repeating year by year the cycle of meditations from God to herself, and from herself again back to God, her soul will be refreshed, the supernatural life will be vigorous in her, and will impart its vigor to all the prayers and actions of the day. Meditation will not be restricted to the half-hour devoted directly to it; it will quicken to life all the spiritual exercises. The holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be heard with greater recollection and a deeper sense of the presence of God, for she will kneel before the altar with her soul steeped in that presence. The recital of the Divine Office will not be open to that bitter complaint of the Almighty to His prophet: "This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." Spontaneously the thoughts of the Religious will turn toward God and the things of God. Her life will show that which Archbishop Ullathorne calls the chief feature of the supernatural life, namely, that *she is always with God.* As the

Royal Psalmist says: "I remembered the days of old, I meditated on all Thy works: I mused upon the works of Thy hands. Cause me to hear Thy mercy in the morning; for in Thee have I hoped. Make the way known to me wherein I should walk; for I have lifted up my soul to Thee" (Ps. cxlii. 5, 8).

As we read in *The Crown of Jesus:* "We can meditate when we sit in the house; when we walk on the way; when we lie down; when we rise up. We can meditate by considering all earthly things as types of holy truths. In trees, the wood of the cross, our Redemption; in dust, our origin. In the sky, heaven our reward. In the stars, the heavenly mansions of those who by their glorious deeds have brought many to justice. In the moon, the Queen of heaven. In the sun, the Son of justice. In the sea, the ocean of eternity. In the waves, the progress of time. In the seashore covered with the waters, our mortality. In the footmarks on the sand erased, fame. In the sudden darkness, mortal sin. In the bright light, God's grace. In the gentle wind, the breath of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. In bread, the Blessed Sacrament, the true Bread of life. In water, the cleansing grace of baptism. In oil, the anointing of the young and of the sick. In the sound of the clock, the irrevocable progress of time.

"We can meditate by adoring the presence of God all around us, as we walk in the midst of Him, or as causing by His Presence in each object we behold, its continued existence and its qualities of good. We can adore God in the center of our heart, dwelling there as in a temple, and by a spiritual union uniting to Himself the soul in grace.

"We meditate by reading slowly, devoutly, a spiritual book, with pious affections and practical resolutions. We meditate by contemplating with true

dispositions the image of the crucifix, or the tabernacle over the altar where, in His sacramental presence, our sweetest Jesus reposes. We meditate by hearing the holy Mass, uniting ourselves with Jesus in His sacrifice. We meditate while we devoutly make the stations of the cross, or recite the holy Rosary in honor of the mysteries. We meditate when we interiorly consider and apply to our soul's need each petition of the *'Pater,'* or other prayer. We meditate when we reverently contemplate in others the type of God's mercy or power."

Meditation in general, and mental prayer in the morning especially, is a duty incumbent on the Religious, the importance of which can not be exaggerated. St. Alphonsus Liguori admonishes us: "Take care to make half an hour's meditation as soon as possible in the day. For though meditation is not absolutely necessary, it is morally necessary, in order to obtain the grace of perseverance. Those who neglect it will find great difficulty in persevering in the grace of God. The reasons for this are twofold: the first is, because the eternal truths can not be seen by the eyes of the flesh, but only by the eye of the understanding, which is reflection. Hence he does not perceive them who does not meditate; and for want of perceiving them he will hardly arrive at a due appreciation of the importance of salvation, of the means which secure it, and of the obstacles which hinder it; so that his salvation will be placed in imminent risk. The second reason is, because the soul that does not practice meditation will also be backward in practicing prayer. Now, prayer is necessary not merely as a precept, but as a means to observe the commandments, since, as a general rule, and speaking of adults, God only gives His grace to those who ask for it. But without

meditation a person has a very faint notion of his own spiritual wants, and he is, moreover, but slightly impressed with the necessity of praying, in order to overcome temptations and to save his soul: thus he is led to pray but little or not at all, and for want of prayer is eventually lost." St. Teresa declares that it is hardly possible for one who prays to remain long in sin; he will either forsake prayer or forsake sin; prayer and sin are incompatible.

Father Godwin continues: "The principle of the spiritual life that 'unless we go forward we shall go backward' applies especially to prayer. Almighty God does not call all men to equal heights of prayer and contemplation, but from those to whom more is given, more will be expected. Now assuredly the priest (or the Religious) is bound to acknowledge that many talents have been given to him, and he is bound in consequence to recognize the duty of trading with those talents and of increasing them.

"It is not of course necessary, nor would it be advisable, to endeavor to measure with mathematical precision our progress in meditation, but every man who is faithful to that duty will be able to discern this much, that he is not going back, that he is attaining greater control over his wandering imagination, that acts of soul flow more spontaneously and more fervently upon the pious considerations made; in one word, that mental prayer is generally easier.

"I say 'generally easier,' because periods of spiritual desolation, due to ill health, to some infidelity, or to a trial from God, will at times seem to cast us back upon the stage of our earliest efforts. These exceptional periods must be carefully distinguished from our usual habits of prayer, when, in our examination of conscience, we apply to ourselves the ascetical principle of continued progress.

"I have said that continued fidelity to the duty of meditation makes that prayer easier. I will go further. Under the influence of divine grace, the very character of that prayer is changed, and according to the natural tendency and disposition of souls it is raised to higher levels of prayer. One soul is arrested in its glance at truth, and dimly resembles in its calm repose the cherubim who stand in silent contemplation before the throne of God. The truth penetrates through and through the soul and is gradually assimilated by it, and lives with its life. Another soul, like to the burning seraphim before the great white throne, is made aglow with the heat of divine love that is excited in it by one glance at the ravishing beauty of the divine truth contemplated. Both begin by the prayer of meditation, and ascetical writers counsel them always so to begin, but the one is soon raised to the sublime prayer of contemplation, the other is carried away by his thought; he ceases to contemplate, and continues to pour out the most fervent acts from his burning soul. The latter is called affective prayer.

"It follows naturally from this that such gifted souls will choose for their mental prayer subjects that are congruous to their advanced spiritual state. It will not be necessary for them to confine themselves with the *major et segnior pars* to subjects proper to the purgative and elementary illuminative way. Theirs is the advanced illuminative and elementary unitive way, and they must be guided by this knowledge in the choice of subjects for mental prayer.

"The above will suffice as a description of the principal forms of higher mental prayer. We will now proceed to the consideration of the act of meditation properly so called.

"Meditation is the lowest form of mental prayer. It calls into play the three powers of the soul, and, to some extent, the senses also. The work of the senses and of the memory is, however, preliminary; the essential acts are those of the intellect and the will. The intellect ponders the truth or the subject of the meditation, whatever it may be, not for the mere purpose of study or speculation, but with a view to stirring the will to acts corresponding to the nature of the contemplation. *'Contemplatio in affectum terminatur,'* says St. Thomas. The two are essential, but the acts of the will form the more important element. The pondering is a means to an end, and as soon as that end is attained and as long as that end perseveres, so long must the pondering be discarded, and only resumed when it is necessary to arouse again the flagging energy of the will. Many distractions at prayer arise from the sometimes fascinating desire to carry a truth to its far-off logical conclusion, or to solve a deep problem that thrusts itself before our notice. If we indulge these inclinations, we at once cease meditation and commence study.

"From this it follows that that system of meditation will be the best to adopt which furnishes considerations that will most easily captivate the attention of the mind, and that at the same time are not so engrossing as to hinder the speedy and spontaneous breaking forth of the will into appropriate acts.

"The Venerable Louis of Grenada in his treatise on meditation counsels the use of *some* method for that prayer. He, however, leaves each one free to adopt the method which suits him best, and which will best prevent him from becoming mechanical. Let him take some prayer—say, the 'Lord's Prayer,' or the 'Hail Mary;' let him go through it phrase by

phrase, dwelling on those words into which the Spirit of God gives him an insight. Or, let him take any three consecutive points, or events; ponder each one, until he feels his heart glow within him; let him then cease to think, but give expression in acts to the feelings of his heart. There will be no necessity to pass on to the other points of the meditation so long as the first remains sufficient incentive to these acts of the soul. In the use of this simple method it is quite a mistake to regard the consideration of all three points as at all necessary to the completeness of the meditation.

"In times of special personal need or distress, or on the recurrence of some feast toward which we may have special devotion, this method will be of great practical utility. In the preparation of our meditation we shall easily be able to discover for ourselves three aspects of the virtue or grace needed, or of the feasts toward which we have special devotion; whereas we might find it impossible to meet with any book or treatment of the subject that we could so readily adopt, and so easily apply to ourselves.

"The Ignatian method prescribes the use of all the three powers of the soul, and also of the imagination. This latter faculty is employed in setting before us a realistic picture or scene for the composition of place; for example, the stable at Bethlehem, the scene at Christ's baptism in the Jordan, the bleak wilderness where He was tempted; the shores of the lake of Genesareth, etc. The memory recalls the events which took place, the persons present, their actions, words, etc.; the intellect ponders each in turn; and the will breaks forth into the different acts that the contemplation calls forth. This system differs only in the elaborateness of its setting forth

from that last mentioned. Its very elaborateness makes it most useful to some orderly and methodical minds, helping them to avoid distractions and a general vagueness and want of point in their meditation.

"The golden rule to follow is to find out by experience that method of meditation which suits us best, and adopt it. Nevertheless, it will be well from time to time, and especially after several futile attempts at meditation according to our fixed method, to make trial of some other approved one."—In the *Prayer-Book for Religious* the Ignatian, the Sulpician, and Bishop Bellord's methods of meditation are fully explained.

St. Alphonsus Liguori renders the practice of mental prayer exceedingly simple, clear, easy, and fruitful. The meditation has three parts: Preparation, Consideration and Conclusion. In the preparation must be made three acts: 1, An act of faith in the presence of God; 2, An act of humility and contrition; 3, An act of petition for light.

Say a "Hail Mary" to the divine Mother, and a "Glory be to the Father" in honor of our angel guardian and of our holy patron. Then read a point of the meditation, and be sure to meditate, at least occasionally, on the Passion of Jesus Christ. While reading, stop at the passages which strike you the most. It must also be understood that the fruit of prayer does not so much consist in meditating, but rather in producing: 1, *Affections,* for instance of humility, confidence, love, sorrow, offering, resignation, etc.; 2, *Prayers,* and especially prayers to obtain God's holy love and the grace of perseverance; 3, *Resolutions* to avoid some particular sin and to practice some particular virtue. Three points are generally considered. The conclusion is made thus:

1. I thank Thee, O God, for the lights Thou hast given me.

2. I purpose to keep the resolutions I have made.

3. I beg Thy grace to fulfil them.

Nor must we ever forget to recommend to God the holy souls in purgatory, and all poor sinners. Recommend yourself to the Blessed Virgin, the saints and your guardian angel. Select an ejaculation and holy thought for the day.

"There is no doubt," as Fra Gaetano da Bergamo says in the preface to his beautiful work, *Thoughts and Affections on the Passion of Jesus Christ*, "that meditation, if rightly understood, means something more than thinking; for we say of our mind that it thinks even when it wanders and is distracted, and apprehends objects present to it but superficially; while it can not be said to meditate unless with mature deliberation it ruminates and penetrates things, so as to arrive, under the guidance of reason, at a knowledge of some truth. Meditation always requires labor and study. We must observe that meditation, to bear fruit, must be accompanied with prayer. Therefore it is important to correct the mistake of those who imagine that meditation and mental prayer are identical. In meditation we exercise the understanding; in prayer, the will. In meditation the soul is recollected in itself; in prayer it is lifted up to God. In meditation the mind is occupied with thoughts; in prayer the heart is excited to affections. You may meditate as long as you please and upon the most sublime subjects; but such meditation will be of small profit if you do not proceed to prayer by producing affections suitable to your thoughts. Meditation is necessary as a preparation for prayer, since it is by means of

thoughts that the affections are awakened and inflamed. On the other hand, prayer is requisite to give to meditation its efficacy and fruit. This is the end of meditation, that the will should be moved, then the affections, so that the truth may not only be known, but loved. Hence the errors of those heretics who dared assert that there was no necessity either to apply our thoughts to the Passion of Jesus Christ, or to exercise our affections upon it, have been condemned.

"What, then, is the proper definition of prayer? Simply this: As meditation is to think seriously on the things of God, so prayer is the devout turning of one's self to God by pious and humble affections. Praising, admiring, adoring God; fearing and loving God; trusting and hoping in God; humbling and resigning one's self to God; delighting in God; grieving over the offences committed against God; compassionating the Man-God in His pains and ignominies; endeavoring to imitate Him. All this is prayer, because it is a turning of one's self to God by the affections of the will. And as meditation no less than prayer should be directed to the well-ordering of our life, which consists in shunning evil and adhering to good; so, in a general way, we may say of affections that they are various movements of the will—loving, desiring, seeking, and resolving either to acquire some virtue or to correct or avoid some vice. We can never work enough, and we shall never work in vain, at eradicating vice and acquiring virtue."

Among vices we should endeavor especially to attack and mortify pride, which is nothing else than an inordinate love of self, and the mother and source of all vices.

Among virtues we should endeavor to cultivate

especially humility and charity: the former being the groundwork and foundation of all virtues; the latter, their crown and perfection.

"Many books of meditation obviate for us the difficulty of choice of subject. They distribute appropriate subjects throughout the year conformably to the liturgical character of the time. The books of the Sacred Scripture are a perennial source of subjects for meditation. Not a book of meditation that has ever been issued but is built upon them. The very extensiveness, however, of the field there open to us presents a great difficulty in the choice of a definite subject, and for that very reason good and pious men have committed to paper the results of their own research, and have given to us systems of meditations drawn from the same divine source." We could give a long list of these books. Father Clare of the Society of Jesus has published an excellent work on *The Science of the Spiritual Life,* which is an amplification of the *Exercises of St. Ignatius.* For Religious communities in general, the following works are perhaps most serviceable and commendable.

1. *Meditations on the Life, the Teaching, and the Passion of Jesus Christ.* For every day of the ecclesiastical year, with an appendix of meditations for the festivals of the various saints. By Rev. Augustine Maria Ilg, O.S.F.C.; translated from the latest German edition; edited by Rev. Richard F. Clarke, S.J. Competent critics are very generous in their laudations of this work. Right Rev. Bishop Maes, for instance, says: "The Ilg-Clarke Meditations are good, and may, for the reason that they are so discursive, suit the majority of readers the better. They will be all the more welcome to those who complain of the dryness of their imagina-

tion and who like plenty of suggestion whereon to place practical resolutions."

2. *Meditations for Every Day in the Year, on the Life of Our Lord.* By the Rev. B. Vercruysse, S.J. The meditations are methodical, short and thoroughly practical.

3. *Meditations for All the Days of the Year.* For the use of priests, Religious, and the laity. By Rev. M. Hamon, S.S.; from the French by Mrs. Anne R. Bennett-Gladstone. This work of the learned and saintly curé of St. Sulpice is certainly worthy of the highest praise.

4. *Growth in the Knowledge of Our Lord.* Meditations for every day of the year; adapted from the original of the Abbé de Brandt, by Sister Mary Fidelis. "An unusually valuable addition to devotional literature, not only spiritual, but sensible," says a reviewer.

5. *Manna of the Soul.* Meditations for every day of the year. By Rev. Paul Segneri, S.J. This book is praised by saintly and scholarly men.

6. *Meditations for Every Day in the Year.* Edited by Rev. Roger Baxter, S.J., of Georgetown College. This excellent work is remarkable for its apt quotations from the Bible; moreover, the exposition and practical application of these scriptural citations are terse, to the point, and very forceful.

7. *Meditations on the Life and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ for Every Day in the Year.* By Rev. J. Nouet, S.J. To which are added meditations on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by Father Borgo of the Society of Jesus. This work presents a digest of the Gospel truths in concise yet meaty meditations, combining what is touching in sentiment with what is practical for the reformation of

conduct; appealing equally to the understanding and the heart.

The Abbé Chaignon's *Meditations* deserve to be mentioned here; also Bishop Bellord's *Meditations on Christian Doctrine,* and *Outlines of Meditations.* Cardinal Newman's *Book of Meditations* treats a number of particular questions only. Challoner's *Meditations* are well known and need no recommendation. A book entitled *Meditations on the Duties of Religious,* by a Superior of the Ursulines of Montargis, is intended especially for those devoted to the instruction of youth. For private meditation on the Passion of Our Lord throughout the year we recommend most earnestly *Thoughts and Affections on the Passion of Jesus Christ,* by the Rev. Gaetano da Bergamo, Capuchin, and, of course, Father Gallwey's *Watches of the Passion.*

For the hour of adoration, Father Tesnière's books, *The Eucharistic Christ* and *The Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,* are excellent. The method according to the *four ends of sacrifice* is followed in the meditations of both books in this order: 1, Adoration; 2, Thanksgiving; 3, Reparation; 4, Prayer. The Rev. A. Tesnière, S.S.S., a member of the Order founded by Père Eymard, is a distinguished theologian as well as a fervent adorer of the Blessed Sacrament. Variety of considerations in the hour of adoration is strongly advocated by Père Eymard. Contemplating the infancy and the Passion of Our Lord as reproduced in the mysteries of the altar, considering Our Saviour in His various characteristics, and viewing Him under all the relations which He sustained in His mortal life from Bethlehem to Calvary, from the crib to the cross—this exercises all our faculties, helps to banish distractions, evokes pious affections, suggests practical

resolutions, in a word, makes the hour of adoration very profitable and fruitful. In Father Tesnière's books, especially in *The Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,* this idea of the "apostle of the Holy Eucharist" is carried out in a masterly manner. These meditations or adorations reveal the grandeur of the mystery of the altar, the infinite love and condescension of Our Emmanuel, the tender solicitude and loving kindness of our Good Shepherd, our divine Friend in the Holy Eucharist, where He dwells all days in our midst, to sweeten our exile, to strengthen us in our struggles, to comfort us in our sorrows, to respond to all our joys, to lift us when we fall, and to keep us in the way that leads to our heavenly Father's home.*

*This article is an adaptation and amplification of a paper published in *The American Ecclesiastical Review,* December, 1903, on *The Importance of Meditation for the Missionary Priest,* by the Rev. E. Godwin, Ph.D.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

On Continual Prayer.

The chapter on continual prayer requires, both on account of the subject as well as the consequences resulting from it, to be treated with care, and read with great attention. The Gospel says: "We must always pray and not faint" (Luke xviii. 1). Let us weigh the words: "We must." It is a precept, not a counsel; a matter of obligation, not a degree of perfection. If we fail in it we sin more or less grievously.

We must; it is a universal duty, and concerns all Christians. It does not concern only the priests of God's Church, or persons consecrated to His service by religious vows, but all who profess to believe in the Gospel and follow it as their rule of life, whether they live in the retirement of the cloister or in the busy world. We must pray always; not only must we have a stated time for prayer, and never let a day pass without praying, but make of it a continual exercise that nothing should put aside nor interrupt.

The words that follow, "pray always and not faint," clearly show us it is thus they are to be understood. First the Gospel ordains that prayer shall be continual, and then forbids its cessation; inculcating thus the precept in two different ways. There is not to be found in the Holy Scripture any other precept expressed in stronger or more explicit terms; yet when taken either as vocal or mental prayer under the name of meditation, it is plainly impracticable. And for this reason those who know of no

other kind of prayer believe themselves authorized to restrict this obligation to certain fixed times. No doubt they would be right if God could only be addressed by word of mouth or intense application of the mind.

But the words of the Gospel lead us further, and they ought to have opened our eyes to see the necessity of another kind of prayer, which is of such a nature that every Christian can apply himself to it continually. And what is this prayer? It is the most essential, the most absolutely necessary part of prayer, that which alone draws God's attention on us, that which gives value to all the rest; in one word, it is the prayer of the heart. This can be made without any interruption. No other can. So it is evidently this that is of precept, and there is no need of making any restriction of which the words do not seem to admit. It is the prayer of the heart, unknown to the Jews, for which Jesus Christ upbraids them, and that God, through His prophet, foretold should be the privilege of the New Law: "In that day," says He, "I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of prayers" (Zach. xii. 10), a spirit of grace that will urge them to pray without ceasing, and a spirit of prayer that will incessantly draw down on them fresh graces; a double spirit that will keep up a constant communication between our heavenly Father and His children. It is this prayer of the heart to which the Apostle St. Paul alludes when he exhorts the faithful to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. v. 17), and when he assures them that he continually remembered them in his prayers.

But, you will say, how can the prayer of the heart be continual? I ask you, how can it be other-

wise? We are agreed that it is the Holy Ghost who dictates this prayer of the heart, whether He already dwells in the heart, or whether He is about to do so. Now as soon as the Holy Ghost begins to pray in the heart, His intention is to pray there without ceasing, and it is our fault if He does not, as it all depends on our corresponding to grace, by the entire subjection of our will to His; just as when He wishes to take possession of our heart our resistance alone prevents Him from doing so, and once admitted He will remain there always, if we do not chase Him away. The Holy Ghost dwelling in the heart would never be idle if He had full liberty to act. And what would He do therein, if not the special work of the Spirit of grace and prayer, and of the Spirit who sanctifies us. He would keep the heart in a continual state of adoration, of thanksgiving, of sorrow for past sins, of supplication for help never to sin again. This does not mean that the heart would, at every moment, be making these special acts, for this is not possible; but we should be always ready to make them when it pleased the Holy Ghost to draw them forth, and the seed of prayer would always be in us, ready at any moment to germinate. This persevering habit of the soul is what I call continual prayer, and it can not be denied that this may, and should be the disposition of every Christian heart. It is the immediate result of charity. Actual prayer is charity put into practice; habitual prayer is the proximate disposition for this.

It is just as easy and quite as natural to the heart to pray without ceasing as to love always. We can always love God, though we are not always thinking of Him nor always telling Him we love Him. It suffices that we should be resolved at all times, not only never to do anything contrary to this love, but

be ready to give to God on every occasion proof of this by actions inspired by grace. Is it not thus that a mother loves her children, a wife her husband, a friend his friend? The cherished object never comes to our mind without calling forth a feeling of love; we would like never to lose sight of it, and if the mind is at times drawn off by other objects the heart never is. Just so is it with prayer. We have the merit to be always praying when we wish so to be, when at every moment we are ready to follow the movements of grace. It would be quite a mistake to imagine that the avocations of life are an obstacle to this prayer. On the contrary, they are, or at least may be, an exercise of it, and there is a prayer that is correctly called the prayer of action. Every action done for God, as being His will, and in the way in which God wills, is a prayer, better even than an actual prayer that might be made at this time. It is not necessary that the action be good and holy in itself; an indifferent act is no less a prayer in virtue of the intention with which we do it. Thus the Apostle virtually enjoins the faithful to pray always when he says: "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Col. iii. 17). And again: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). If an animal or physical action, such as eating or drinking, does not interrupt prayer, much less would labor, whether of the body or of the mind, or details of housekeeping, domestic duties, or the occupations of one's state of life. In all this, nothing of itself distracts the heart from union with God; nothing stops the action of the Holy Ghost and the soul's cooperation with it. This is saying little, for

every action helps to unite us more closely to God, and to entertain the secret intercourse of the soul with the Holy Ghost. We are always praying if we are doing our duty, and are doing it to please God.

I rank among the actions that take the place of prayer: visits of politeness and convenience, friendly conversations, relaxations of the body and mind, provided they are seemly and within the limits of Christian morality. None of these things are incompatible with unceasing prayer; and with the exception of what is bad, unbecoming, or useless, there is nothing that the Holy Ghost may not claim and sanctify and that is not under the dominion of prayer. The *agapæ*, or love-feasts of the first Christians, instituted by the Apostles, were they not holy, and seasoned with spiritual joy? Did they weaken in them the spirit of grace and prayer? or rather did they not promote fraternal charity? Why should it not be the same with our meals and recreations, if we resembled the primitive Christians? What I find so admirable in our religion is that it teaches us to honor God in everything, to pray to Him at all times, and to practice virtue on every occasion, and that there is nothing indifferent or useless in the Christian life.

As there is a prayer of action, so is there also a prayer of suffering, and this is the most excellent and pleasing to God. It is a very common thing for us to complain of not being able to pray because we are ill, are suffering acute pain, or are in a state of weakness or languor. Did not our blessed Lord pray on the cross, and the martyrs on the scaffold? Actual prayer at such a time is impossible, unless it be at intervals, and by short aspirations; neither is it expected. But suffer for God; suffer with sub-

nission and patience; suffer in union with Jesus Christ, and you will be praying exceedingly well.

Thus it is that a truly Christian heart can and ought to pray unceasingly, partly by consecrating a fixed time for prayer, partly by acting, and partly also by suffering. And if we take notice we shall find that continual prayer is but the outcome of all the precepts of Christian morality. It is indispensable for the perfect observance of these precepts, it makes it easy, and without prayer their practice would be impossible. Thus is everything held together, the connecting link unbroken, and the one leads to the other.

There is also nothing which makes us better feel the necessity of being interior, that is, as St. Paul explains it, of being moved by the Spirit of God, than the obligation of continual prayer. For we can not fulfil this obligation if we are not in a state of grace, or if we willingly entertain thoughts contrary or irrelevant to those which God wishes should at all times occupy us, or if we give ourselves up to affections which at least divide the heart, and deprive God of a part of it. As soon as we become interior men, then the Holy Ghost takes possession of the soul and reigns there as He pleases. His first inspiration is an attraction to continual prayer; He makes the soul find in this practice a most entrancing pleasure that fills her with a loathing for the things of earth and draws her from them, so that her conversation is henceforth in heaven.

All this may seem a vain imagination and exaggerated piety to ordinary Christians, who, through their own faults, have never tasted this heavenly gift, nor felt any attraction for what is interior. "It is quite enough," say they, "to pray at stated times; beyond that, it is quite admissible that we give free

play to our minds, provided we do not entertain bad thoughts. There are also many innocent inclinations and tastes that we may indulge without scruple. What tedium, what slavery to regulate one's life always according to the interior action of grace! However it may be explained, this continual prayer is an intolerable bondage." Thus speak half-hearted Christians who find it wearisome to be reminded of God, and to whom prayer is a heavy obligation. They interpret the Gospel according to their own dispositions. They like to deceive themselves, and they speak evil of what is unknown to them, so as to give themselves the right to live in a careless way and give some freedom to nature. But these lax sentiments will never prevail against the doctrine of Jesus Christ; they will always find therein their own condemnation, as well as in the maxims and examples of the saints. Besides it is not true that the practice of continual prayer is laborious to the degree they would make out. If we believed them, it deprives man of all liberty or freedom of mind to attend to business; it does not allow him to give his mind to the intercourse of life; in conversation he is heavy, always inattentive, absorbed in the thought of heavenly things; alone or in society he always feels obliged to be serious and to forbid himself every kind of amusement. Human weakness could not endure such an exalted state. In any case to be able to lead such a life one would have to live like an anchorite.

All this is pure exaggeration. I admit that continual prayer is a restraint on the senses, on the imagination of the sensual man; and there is not a single point in the moral precepts of the Gospel that does not impose a like restraint on nature. But far from impeding man in the discharge of his duties,

it helps him; far from fettering his talents, it teaches him to make that use of them for which God gave them to him; he becomes more assiduous in his business; he bears more lightly its burden; and he succeeds better in it. If it deprives him of a false liberty, to which he pays a sort of worship, and of which he makes an ill-use to his own ruin, it brings him into the true liberty of the children of God. It does not forbid him to mix in society, according to the exigency or claims of his position in life; on the contrary it makes him more easy of access, more affable, more obliging. It makes him take his full share in the conversation, authorizes him to exert his conversational powers without any affectation, to be interested and animated in speech; it makes him speak and listen to the purpose, and behave in such a manner that he pleases every one. At the same time it is obvious that he chooses his society, and that, when occasion offers, no human respect ever makes him wound charity, or be wanting in his respect for God or his neighbor.

Continual prayer, as I have explained it, being but a certain disposition of the heart, turns habitually toward God; it does not require a strain on the mind, which is always free to apply itself to what God wishes of it, or allows it at every moment; but its application is such that it is not enthralled by it, and at any given moment it passes with equal freedom to another subject. We pray without thinking of it, without reflecting, without any one being aware of it, or suffering from it. In short, wherever our heart turns, there our prayer turns also; sleep only interrupts it; yet still it may be truly said with the spouse in the Canticles: "I sleep and my heart watcheth" (Cant. v. 2). I do not see how a prayer like this can have any tedium for one's self or for

others. On the contrary it is most delightful to him who makes it, and it can never inconvenience our neighbor, who will gain great profit by frequenting the society of those who devote themselves to it. Besides, whether it be tedious or not, it is a precept, and every Christian must try to practice it.

How are we to do this? We must love God with our whole heart, with our whole mind, refer all our actions to Him, and have no other intention or desire but to please Him. We must wish to be entirely in His grace, and must contract the easy habit of listening to that gentle, interior voice, of being docile to its warnings, and reproving ourselves for the slightest infidelity. We must also be firmly resolved to renounce our own will, wage war against our self-love, keep a watch over our natural inclinations, and refuse them whatever they crave if it prejudice what we owe to God. That is, we must be Christians according to the maxims of the Gospel, seriously and efficaciously; we must go once for all to the school of Christ and become the disciples of the Holy Ghost. When you have taken this resolution, and the necessary steps to put it into execution, you will pray, or it will not be long before you will pray, continually, because the Holy Ghost will at once take possession of you, and you will make rapid strides in union with God. If you have not yet taken this resolution, but have only the desire to do so, nourish and cultivate this desire by frequent aspirations, by pious readings, and salutary reflections. "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." It is unheard of that any one who desired to pray continually, who with fervor solicited this grace, and who in order to obtain it did all that God inspired him to do—it is, I say, unheard of that such a one

did not attain to this happy state. It would indeed be a contradiction in terms. From whom does this desire come? Certainly from God Himself. Does He give it without a purpose? That can not be. He places this desire for prayer within you in order to bestow that gift on you; He will infallibly give it to you if you ask for it as you ought; and He invites you and presses you and helps you to use the following language: I have never known what continual prayer is, and I have been far from knowing it. But, O my God, what I have just been reading gives at the same time the idea and the desire of it. I see it is a precept on which all others depend, and without which I can not fulfil them, since it is the only means to carry them out. There is no middle course: either I must renounce the practice of evangelical perfection, or adopt that of continual prayer. Can I for a moment waver? And even were Thy glory not at stake, should I risk my own salvation in renouncing the effort to be a perfect Christian?

O Holy Spirit! I give my heart to Thee without reserve and forever. Enkindle therein a fire of love, whence shall ascend, like incense, a prayer rising incessantly toward heaven, which will draw down without ceasing all the graces I need. If Thy heart, O my God! is always occupied with me, is it not just that mine should be entirely devoted to Thee? O perfect beauty! O infinite goodness! Canst Thou be an object less interesting to me than I am to Thee! Thy delight is to be with the children of men and to converse with them, and should not mine be to hold communion with Thee! Unceasing adoration, uninterrupted love, are the portion of the blessed; why should I not make this my lot on earth, and thus have a foretaste of the happiness of

heaven? Shall I always be my own enemy—always opposed to my true happiness? No, my God! I will begin to pray without interruption in time, that I may continue to do so in eternity.*

*From *How to Pray,* by Abbé Grou, S.J.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Breviary.—The Divine Office.

The Breviary.

THE breviary is a formulary of prayers and sacred reading which priests recite daily. Formerly the psalms, hymns, orations, and spiritual selections, which all priests and Religious were obliged to recite, were of considerable length. Pope St. Gregory VII. abridged this "Office," for those of his pontifical court who were under the obligation of saying it. This abridgment soon became of common use throughout the Church, under the name of "Roman Breviary." According to some authors it takes its name from the fact of its forming, as it were, a summary of religion, a compendium of Christian teaching. According to Benedict XIV., breviary signifies a short, brief order of the Divine Office. It was also called *"Officium divinum; Opus Dei,"* because its recitation is a sacred work which has God for its object. *"Pensum servitutis,"* because it is a debt, a duty to be paid to God by those who are in a special manner consecrated to Him. *"Cursus,"* because it should be said, in its different parts, according to the hours of the day. *"Horæ Canonicæ,"* either because the sacred canons ordain its recitation or because it obliges the regular Canons in particular. *"Synaxis"* or *"Collecta,"* because in monasteries it is recited in common.

The breviary contains the Divine Office, or the formal prayers which the Church puts into the

mouths of her priests and Religious. It is composed of seven parts, called canonical hours, *viz.*, Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. The part called Matins, which are said toward the break of day, is also called Nocturn or Vigils, because formerly it was chanted during the night. Lauds are said after Matins. The custom to-day is to recite these parts on the eve of the feast or feria to which they belong. There are yet certain Religious Orders which recite them during the night, beginning at 2 A.M. Prime is said at sunrise; Terce, at the third hour, or 9 A.M.; Sext, at the sixth hour, or noon; None, at the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. The general custom to-day is to recite these "little hours," as they are called, in the morning. Vespers followed by Compline form the evening prayers. This division of the Divine Office is not an obligatory one. The Church has made these divisions in order to imitate David, who sang the praises of God seven times a day. A reform being found necessary, the Council of Trent made it the object of a special decree. The breviary was restored to its primitive purity, and thus first edited by Pope Pius V., and then by Urban VIII., who prescribed the new edition for the entire Church. However, the Churches of the Oriental rite, as also the dioceses of Milan, Italy, and Toledo, in Spain, were exempted by the papal rescript from the use of this edition. In the United States the Roman Breviary is obligatory.*

The Divine Office.

If we enter some great factory, and watch the hundreds of whirring, clattering looms which are

*From the *Ecclesiastical Dictionary.*

rapidly producing costly materials, we can not understand what it is that regulates and sets in motion all this machinery unless we have been shown the motive power. So now, let us examine what answers to the steam or the electricity, *i. e.,* the creative, motive principle of all monastic life and activity. It is prayer, prayer in common, the solemn Divine Office in choir, of which our holy father St. Benedict says, "*Operi Dei nihil præponatur,*" "Let nothing be preferred to the work of God." Thus does our legislator term the worship of God in community, because in a most true sense it is, both corporally and spiritually, work for God and with God. To it *nihil,* nothing, is to be preferred, neither private prayer and contemplation, nor manual labor, nor study, nor active work for souls, preaching, instructing, giving missions, or anything else; *nihil præponatur,* there is nothing more important, more holy, more efficacious for a monk than the praise of God.

Is this the case nowadays? Is not our century one of action, of restless, unwearying activity, and not of quiet, contemplative prayer? And, indeed, is not all comprehension of such a life of prayer well-nigh lost? When a Religious community is mentioned, one is asked first and foremost: What do they do? What is their occupation? as if they were manufacturers. Once when I informed a friend in the world of my intentions of entering the cloister, he said, "I can understand that; it is so grand, so glorious, to give one's self entirely to the service of God, but don't go into a contemplative Order. In these days work is needed; the question is, what is most for the common good? They say, of course, that they pray for all of us, but what do we get by that? We want to see them work and labor to make

themselves useful." This is the opinion of a wide circle, but it is one suggested by a very superficial faith. St. Benedict's declaration, that nothing is to be preferred before the work of God, is it then no longer true? Have we outlived it? Is God changed, or have we, nowadays, less need of Him? Can human activity supply the place of divine grace, and is it not solely by prayer that this is called down upon us?

When Israel fought against Amalec, Moses on the mountain was raising his hands in prayer; it was not the fighting warriors that were victorious, but the power of prayer that vanquished the enemy, for as often as Moses let fall his hands it was Amalec that got the upper hand. This type has often been used in favor of the Church suppliant as compared with the Church militant, and very justly; and at this present time, as much as ever, nay, more than ever, do we stand in need of prayer, and of the solemn prayer in common of the Divine Office. But as the conception of this has well-nigh faded from men's minds let us be permitted to set it forth in all its real significance, as regards itself, the monks, and finally, the Church and mankind in general. . . . The worship of God is the first and most important duty of the human race. Man is a rational being, is created to praise God, says St. John Chrysostom, to offer to God the worship of the whole creation. Nor is it sufficient that each individual should comply with this duty by his own prayers. The relation of God to man, of the Creator to the creature, of the King of kings to His subjects, demands a solemn common worship, sacrifice and prayer, such service as holy Church offers to God. The human race must offer to God socially, either as a united body or by due representation, its tribute of adoration,

praise, and thanksgiving. If each individual member of a corporation or of a parliament were to offer his homage to the king in private, this would by no means have the same significance as if all did so in common, or by special and solemn deputation. And this is what God requires, for it is written, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God;" "All the earth doth worship Thee;" "All the nations that Thou hast made shall come and adore before Thee, O Lord;" "Praise the Lord, all ye nations, praise Him, all ye peoples;" "Let all the earth bless the Lord, let it praise and exalt Him above all forever." The great significance of this official praise of God may be recognized also by its sublimity. Next to the holy sacrifice of the Mass, in which the work and fruit of our Redemption are continually renewed and perpetuated, the Divine Office gives the greatest glory to God, and it is most closely united and intimately connected with that sacrifice.

The holy Mass is often called the sun of the spiritual life and the Choir Office is compared to the rays which surround it. Without the sun, which is Christ Himself, there would be no rays, but on the other hand the rays announce and spread far and wide the glory of the sun, and it is by their means that we receive its beneficial light and heat. The Choir Office possesses a grandeur beyond all that is merely human, for it is divine, divine in its origin and source, divine in the Object of its praise, and divine in its form, which is of no human invention. The Holy Spirit lives, works, and speaks in the Church, and we have to thank Him for its contents, its arrangement, and its words, which He has inspired. It is the official prayer of the Church, and as she is the mystical body of Christ every breath in her body belongs to Him. He is her head, and

her prayer, her language, her voice are His, and therefore divine. *"Laudat ipse seipsum Deus,"* "He Himself praises Himself," says St. Augustine. The due celebration of this worship is a supernatural office, it is the service of angels, and will be our blessed occupation for all eternity.

The sublimity of this solemn praise of God implies also its efficacy. Our divine Lord Himself has said: "Wheresoever two or three are united in My name, there am I in the midst of them," and again, "Whatsoever you shall ask in My name, I will give it to you." "Thy prayer," says St. John Chrysostom, "is not of such efficacy when thou prayest alone as when thou prayest with thy brethren," for, as St. Ambrose observes, "if many souls unite they become powerful, and God can not despise the prayers of a multitude."

They who sing psalms thus together, as a well-ordered army in battle array, do violence to heaven, a violence most pleasing to God, *"Hæc vis Deo grata est."* Individuals are as drops borne on by the force of the stream. Devotion in common arouses, vivifies, enkindles; it overcomes, to a certain extent, the tepid distractions of the individual, and unites him in the sonorous harmony of the choir, and thus the common prayer and praise resound like one voice rich and full-toned, well pleasing to God. It is the voice of the Church, of His Son, to which He can not but listen, *"totius Ecclesiæ vox una,"* "the one voice of the whole Church." This solemn praise of God has at all times been offered to Him by mankind. The ancient patriarchs offered sacrifice, and prayed surrounded by their families or their tribe. Moses regulated the service of God before the tabernacle, appointed to the priests their office, which was

duated by the tribe of Levi. Levites were the chosen singers, who interceded for the people. David's first care when, after glorious victories, he had established his kingdom, was to order a becoming worship for the sanctuary of the Lord. He chose out four thousand singers from among the Levites, whom he divided into twenty-four choirs; and he himself, the hero king, with golden harp in hand, intoned the festal hymns and psalms at the head of the grand choir of priests. "As often as the sun rose in the east on Jerusalem, or sank behind the mountains of Sion, psalms and musical instruments accompanied the morning and evening sacrifice." And when his son, the wise King Solomon, had completed the building of the magnificent Temple, he stood in the presence of the whole people of Israel, before the altar of the Lord, and stretched forth his hands toward heaven. Then, kneeling on both knees, he offered a solemn prayer of consecration. He praised, gave thanks, and prayed, and the whole people joined in adoration with him, and in sacrifice to the Lord. And under the New Covenant, of which the Old was but a shadow and a type, should not this adoring worship of God find a yet grander and more glorious expression? The Church has entered on the heritage of the Synagogue; has received from it the precious treasure of Holy Scripture; what were but dark, prophetic sayings have become the accomplished works of God, in the fulfilment of which she rejoices to-day. At the birth of the world's Redeemer angelic choirs intoned their hymns of praise, the poor shepherds joined in them, and now they resound, without interruption, throughout the whole world. Christ, the divine King and Priest, not only offered to His heavenly Father a sacrifice such as alone was worthy

of Him, but He worshiped Him also, with the choir of His apostles, by psalms and hymns, and so He still worships Him wherever Christians are gathered together in His name, for He is with them and in them till time shall be no more.

When the psalmody died away in the desecrated Temple, it awoke in the joyful choirs of the early Christian congregations, and following in the footsteps of the apostolic missionaries it spread throughout Asia Minor and Greece, extended all along the coast of the Mediterranean, and found an echo in the deserts of Egypt. The subterranean vaults of the catacombs resounded with the Christian hymns; and when the spell of heathen domination was broken there sprang up gorgeous temples and grand cathedrals, in which the praises of God were sung with all solemnity by priests and faithful. Soon the Church was reckoned no more by congregations, but by nations; it became no longer possible for all the faithful to assemble together daily for the praise of God, and they intrusted this duty to the priesthood. For them, therefore, this Divine Office, or recitation of the breviary, became the first and most important duty. All the thousands of priests who, the wide world round, daily—nay, from the differences of time, ceaselessly—recite their hours in the name of holy Church, form, as it were, one single choir, one sounding harp, in unison with the never-ceasing intercession and praise of the divine High Priest. The whole intention, the construction and arrangement of the Divine Office, indicates the element of community; it is founded on alternation of singing, and on the united action of the clergy and the people, as is distinctly expressed even in the Holy Sacrifice itself; "*publica est nobis*

et communis oratio," "we have a public and common worship."

In the Holy Sacrifice, however, this union is purely spiritual. Priests and people meet together, it is true, wherever it is possible, for prayer in common, and it is still kept up in the cathedrals and collegiate churches of Catholic lands, but this does not satisfy the Church, who desires that God should be honored by united, solemn, uninterrupted choral worship, and for this purpose a special order of men is required. It is true that the evangelical counsels are practiced by the priesthood, inasmuch as they have embraced poverty (at least in spirit), promised obedience to their bishop, and vowed perpetual chastity, but even this is not enough. The endeavor to attain perfection, which has been confirmed by the three vows, must find its due representation in a special state of life, or holy Church would be deprived of her choicest blossoms, her most delicious fruits.

Thus arose the necessity for the religious state, the members of which, both men and women, should be consecrated in an especial manner to God, and belong to Him alone. They are the followers of the early Christian communities, of which it was said, "they were all together and had all things in common . . . continuing daily with one accord in the temple . . . praising God." This early Christian community life in poverty, obedience, and continual prayer was never to cease throughout the Church as she grew and spread over all the earth, and it continued its existence in the cloister. There, above all, should the inextinguishable flame of the divine praise be fed, there be found the mouthpiece and the harp of holy Church. The cloister is not only a rallying point for all Christian people, a model of

Christian life, but also a glowing flame of fervent prayer, the perpetual lamp ever burning to the glory of God. This then was the first and chief task, the reason for community life, the element of union among its members, so that we could expect them rather to pray together without living together, than ever to give up prayer in common, as, in fact, Carthusians live in separate dwellings, and hermits dwell in cells apart from one another, yet all meet together for choral prayer.

This call to prayer was understood of old by the dwellers in the Eastern "lauras," and the fathers of the Egyptian deserts, as well as by the monks of the early monasteries in Italy and Gaul, but it was first brought out in its full beauty and significance by our holy father, St. Benedict. He grasped the idea of the liturgical life with all the ardor and strength of a heart devoted to God; he carried it out with the talent for organization of a Roman patrician, and he made his Order the herald of this scheme for the solemn worship of God, the representation of the prayer of the Church. Thirteen chapters of his holy Rule treat of the Divine Office, and we may well say the end and aim of it is to make each individual monk, who for his own sanctification has sought to become a member of the monastic family, so utterly give himself up to it as to be but one more voice in the harmonious choir of the brotherhood who have undertaken to represent upon earth the adoration that Jesus Christ Himself ever pays to His heavenly Father. All turns upon this, the glorious ceremonies, the splendid vestments, the lofty vaulted temples, and the sonorous chant which resounds within them. The Benedictine monk rarely goes out into the world; his task is to glorify God in the temple of His majesty, and in so doing

to sanctify himself. Well, therefore, could the great legislator say, *"Nihil præponatur,"* "Nothing shall be preferred before the work of God," and for this reason it should be looked for as a sign of true vocation, whether the newcomer "be zealous for the service of God, *"Si sollicitus sit ad opus Dei."*

Wholly engrossed in the dignity and grandeur of this service, the choir monk lives but for this sacred obligation. Not single days from time to time, but the entire year becomes a prolonged and varied festival, which has for him an ever newer and deeper meaning. Penetrating more and more into the mystical depths of the liturgical prayers and ceremonial, he thus sanctifies both his outer and inner man, and, like the angels, who in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity sing unceasingly their glorious Trisagion, so does he wholly devote himself, with all his powers and faculties, to the service of the Most High. Like them, he never leaves his place before the ever present God; the choir stall is his home. His constant employment forms him into a man of God, into an instrument of God, apt and ready at once for every task, for every charge; and there is no labor from which he would withdraw himself if it were imposed upon him by obedience. These most glorious occupations, which take him into the heavenly courts and number him among the chamberlains of his sovereign Lord, ennoble his whole being, and give to him that quiet dignity, that refined simplicity, that humble recollectedness, that fervent self-devotion, which the service of the King of kings demands. O happy and blessed vocation! O gracious choice! *"Beatus quem elegisti et assumpsisti,"* "Blessed is he whom Thou hast chosen and taken to Thee."

But the Divine Office is not alone a school of

sanctification for each individual monk, it is the very marrow and heart of the Order. As the saints of God, so the different Orders in the Church have each their peculiar mission in the divine economy. Our holy father St. Benedict first brought into settled form the Day Office of the Church, which, having been in use ever since the time of the apostles, had been continually developing into greater completeness. He arranged the psalms, lections, and prayers, especially for his own monks, but always according to the spirit and the decrees of the Church of Rome, *"sicut psallit Ecclesia Romana,"* "as the Roman Church sings." The Church supported his work by her authority, and illustrious Popes, like St. Gregory the Great (himself a son of St. Benedict), regulated by it the Divine Office of the whole Church. The diffusion of the solemn praise and worship of God was thus the lifelong task of the Benedictine Order, and at the same time the cause of its development and rapid extension. The Order stands and falls with the Choir Office; its source of fertility is in the liturgical life, with the decline of which its own goes hand in hand. It is the chosen representative of the Church, in her quality of worshiper of God. Not only have priests found in our abbeys a place for spiritual recollection suited to the work of their vocation, but the people also, as children of the Church, have drawn from this common source devotion and grace. Thousands of monasteries, cities of God, fortresses of holy Church, made the whole of Europe a garden of the Lord. They were as the salt of the earth during the Middle Ages, so long as they remained true to their vocation. They were models alike for the family and the state, nurseries of the arts and sciences, but only so long as these were planted on

the soil of the liturgical life. In those ages of holy zeal men wished to offer Almighty God a perpetual adoration, and to this end there were monasteries in which three choirs followed one another in unbroken succession. At Bangor and Iona, in the monastery of St. Boniface at Fulda, at Meissen, and many more in Saxony, the *laus perennis* resounded uninterruptedly by day and night. In the last-named monastery it was thus continued during three centuries. Later on, as a crown of stately abbeys began to encircle the earth, each took up the task from the other, at the call of the rising day-star, and thus was their adoration truly perpetual. Then other Orders came to join in the great song of praise, Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, and thus was perfected a harmony most pleasing to God, which rose ever before His throne as a sacrifice of sweet savor.

It may well be said that the history of the Middle Ages was materially influenced by the cloister, that the well-being or the evil lot of nations, their triumphs or their defeats, their peaceful development or their internal disquietude, were closely bound up with the ebb and flow of their religious life, and especially with the condition of their monasteries. And this is why princes were often the founders, benefactors, and supporters of the abbeys of their country, from whence they looked for the help of prayer in life and death, and in which it was their earnest desire that their bodies might one day be laid to rest, so that even in death they might reap their share of blessing from the choral prayer which re-echoed round their tomb.

In order to understand aright this mysterious action, this power which guides the fate of nations, as well as of individuals, it is necessary to have a

true and lively faith in the power of prayer. It was the monks who, by their intimate union with the Church triumphant, drew down the blessing of Heaven on the Church militant. They were the most faithful sons of the vicegerents of Christ, whose authority they upheld; the support of the bishops, who were mostly nominated from their ranks; the counsellors of princes, the friends and benefactors of the people. When, once upon a time, the Emperor Charles V. was overtaken with his fleet on the African coast by a violent storm, and it was feared that the ships would be lost, he suddenly asked what time it was. "Midnight," was the reply. "Oh, then the danger is past," said the Emperor, "for at this hour in Spain all the monks and nuns rise for prayer."

When this faith grew dim, when false philosophy and revolutionary movements, shaking both altar and throne, undermined the very foundations of Christian belief, when all these distressing novelties penetrated even into the cloister, then indeed these citadels of God's glory, attacked by foes both within and without, could not but fall. That sense of spiritual joy which makes the glad heart sing psalms was lost; with its loss the bonds of discipline and childlike obedience were relaxed. In many countries the Religious Orders thus degenerate were no longer worthy of their high calling, and the confusion within the Church, the diminution of faith, and the increasing licentiousness of the people, demanded new and different instruments of divine grace. The time of tranquil possession was at an end, and was succeeded by a period of struggle after the highest good. The Church, recognizing at all times the needs of the age, brought forth, in her maternal fecundity, men of action and of holy zeal, who,

banding themselves together into new Orders and Congregations, threw themselves into the breach to reconquer and to save the threatened liberty of the Church. They had no time for the Choir Office; work was their watchword, consuming zeal for souls made them forgetful of themselves, and their mission required a freedom of action which chafed at the confinement of the quiet cloister.

Were the monks then set aside forever? Is it true that the Choir has become superfluous, that it has no longer any power, any significance? No, indeed! Instruction, education, missions, care of souls in all its phases, are not in themselves sufficient to uphold and increase the kingdom of God on earth; all these require the support of prayer, of united prayer, which is a bond of union between heaven and earth. This prayer is not only one of the adornments of the Church, but also one of her most powerful weapons, of which she stands even more and more in need. Of what use is the courage, the contempt of death of the warriors of Israel, if Moses keeps not his hands uplifted in prayer? By prayer men obtain not only the aid of Heaven, a supernatural strength in their struggles, but instruction and direction for their moral life. "Wherever this public and ceremonious worship of God has been abolished, there," says a French theologian, "as a natural consequence, the people fall back into a state of awful barbarism and the most unheeding ignorance of all natural and social duties."

By the sympathy of a people with the liturgical worship of God we may estimate their moral and religious state. This was the case even in the classic days of paganism, and it continued to be so during the palmiest days of Christendom. St. Jerome relates that the inhabitants of Palestine used to sing

verses of the psalms alternately during their labor in the fields, and St. Ambrose tells us that people of all ranks, both men and women, were in the habit of assisting at Matins on Sundays and festivals in the monastery church. This pious custom still continued in the days of faith, and rich were the blessings it drew down upon the Christian family and the community at large. We remember how Mabel, the mother of St. Edmund of Canterbury, used to rise every night with her little son to assist at Matins in the abbey church of Abingdon, and how English monarchs like Canute, St. Edward, and Henry VI. loved to assist at the Choir Office in the monasteries of Ely, Westminster, and Bury. St. Cæsarius of Arles used to exhort his people to go at night to Matins, and many ancient canons required that the faithful should attend Vespers as well as Mass; several synods in the time of Charlemagne ordained that they should join in the psalms and responsories. King Alfred the Great always carried a breviary about with him: "Praise the Lord, kings of the earth, and all people, princes, and all judges of the earth." Nowadays, this true appreciation of the Choir Office has been lost, and it is no longer the custom to take part in it; hence the great and deplorable ignorance on ecclesiastical subjects that exists among the people generally, and which extends often to highly cultured circles. Few can understand the Latin prayers of holy Mass, and yet every educated person ought to be sufficiently instructed in the language of the Church to be able to follow the liturgy. In the Middle Ages it was familiar to all educated people, and even the peasants and townsfolk knew many psalms by heart. "The psalms are easily remembered when they are often sung," said Bishop Nicetius. In Italy and France

even now we find the people singing the psalms at Vespers, but in England the practice is well-nigh lost, the glorious chant is all but forgotten. And yet, once upon a time, when the civil power sought to root it out, the people even used force to preserve it. The men of Devon and Cornwall rose in the time of Edward VI., clamoring for the restoration of Matins, Mass, Evensong, and Litany, the ancient services they had learned to love. They were, indeed, but echoing the demand of the heroes of the pilgrimage of grace. Their pious outcries were only stifled by the violence of foreign mercenaries. How much of lively emotion, of ennobling sentiment, and of heavenly consolation is lost to a family and to every member of it, when they can not understand the prayers of the Church, no longer care to follow the liturgical offices, and for the most part fall back upon the sickly and enervating food of the sentimental books of devotion which crowd the book-market by the dozen.

With a growing faith, its outward expression will again come to life. Instead of the empty, cold services of a so-called "enlightened age" our churches will once more array themselves in warmer clothing, and through their richly decked naves will again resound the time-honored prayers and chants of a Christian past, full of the Holy Spirit of God.

Already there are many pious souls who not only use the Missal for their daily Mass, but also rejoice to assist at the day Office of the Church whenever circumstances will permit. Moreover, there are now many highly cultured men and women who have applied themselves with pious industry to the due understanding of the liturgy, and who delight in its rich perfume. The founder of a glorious abbey in Belgium is present every day with his family

at conventual Mass and Vespers, and gentlemen of all ranks, even officers in uniform, are often to be seen among the guests in our foreign abbeys following the prayers of the choir, and we are acquainted with a great manufacturer, with two thousand workmen in his employ, who says regularly every day the Roman Breviary.

Interest in the liturgy is rapidly growing and spreading. Zealous priests and good books, such as Dom Gueranger's well-known work, help people to comprehend it. But, before all else, this is the task of the abbey, to enhance once more the grandeur of the liturgical offices. The Benedictine Order must be ever more and more conscious of this, its great mission, and setting aside as secondary all other exterior work, must give the first place to the solemn Office of the Choir, and by furthering with holy zeal the solemn service of the altar show itself once more worthy of its great forefathers. This is felt even in the world, as is proved very clearly by the desire for such centers of prayer and praise, the demand for monasteries, and the lively interest taken in the divine worship and the increasing appreciation of it, wherever they have sprung up. From far and near the people flock to them to listen to the sacred chant, to delight in the splendor and dignity of the divine worship, and to feel their hearts borne up toward God by the sounds of jubilant and supplicating prayer.

What are the psalms which form the principal part of the ecclesiastical worship? Composed three thousand years ago, they were used by the Synagogue, which looked forward with eager longing to the coming of Him of whom they spoke in mystic and prophetic utterance. In the fulness of time Christ came; He, also, used the psalms from the

crib to the cross, and since then His Church continues by them her glorious hymn of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving. They rise as the outward flame of the inward fire which the Redeemer would fain enkindle in all hearts, as the earthly echo of that celestial harmony which is unceasingly heard around the throne of the Most High. The psalms are the work of the Holy Ghost, but in order to make them known God chose out a man after His own heart, and placed a harp in his hand that he might evoke their unearthly strains. This was David the king. Rarely had mortal man such vast experience of the vicissitudes of life as had the Psalmist. There is no joy that he did not taste, no sorrow by which his soul was not wrung; his life comprised within its course every emotion which the human heart can feel. Raised from the lowly condition of a shepherd boy to the high station of a great king, he tasted all the joys and sorrows of life, and having fallen into the abyss of grievous sin he rose once more to the loftiest heights of virtue and of sanctity. Thus, if he experienced all the anguish of penance, he learned also all the rapture of the most fervent love of God, and so every emotion of the human heart passed through his great and noble soul, and found expression in those divinely inspired canticles, the psalms. There is no sentiment, no frame of mind that they do not portray and turn again toward God. Their words are ever fresh, ever new, a poetry of undying beauty.

And these psalms, given to us by the Spirit of God, were on the lips of the child Jesus during His hidden life with Mary and Joseph at Nazareth. He sang them with His disciples, He made use of them in His Passion and in His last heartrending words upon the cross: "My God, My God, why hast Thou

forsaken Me? Into Thy hands I commend My spirit." So the psalms continued to be the prayer, the voice of holy Church; by them her children implore light and consolation, medicine in all their maladies, weapons and defense against every need; for their mystical depths contain the most consoling secrets of our faith. Our forefathers recited these psalms, the saints pondered over them, and the martyrs were strengthened by them. Oh, if only Christian people would as of old value these treasures aright, how greatly would they serve to promote a true spirit of faith.

There was once a monk of Citeaux, around whose head a flame was seen to play while he was singing the *Benedictus,* and when questioned, he replied: "I was thinking that if I were in heaven, it is thus I would desire forever to praise God with all the angels." Blessed Stephen of Tournay says of the same monastery of Citeaux: "They celebrate the divine worship there with such dignity and devotion that one could believe one heard angels' voices in their choir; by their psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles they constrain one to praise God in imitation of the angels."

In the early days of monastic life, no manuals of meditation were required; the Divine Office sufficed the brethren, and afforded them material for rapturous contemplation.

In this contemplation our fathers used to penetrate deeply into the mysteries of the sacred word, and they were wont to draw forth from it ever new treasures of light and grace, which caused their hearts to overflow with holy enthusiasm and delight.

The Divine Office, the prayer of the choir, is not only the lifelong duty of the monk; it is also his school of sanctity, and of the interior life. A mon-

astery in which the Divine Office is kept up according to the spirit of our holy father must needs flourish, and bring fruits of virtue to maturity. But it is work, and hard work. Prayer is work, honorable, useful and necessary, requiring the exercise of all our powers, for it directs both body and soul in the service of God. "And let us so stand to sing in the choir," says the holy Rule, "that mind and voice may accord together." "Let us so stand;" that is, place ourselves in such a posture as may further recollection of spirit; the whole man must pray. And this is why the Divine Office in choir has somewhat of the dramatic about it. It affords little scope for individuality—it is an official prayer offered in common. The whole choir turn, bend, kneel, rise up as one man, with a rhythmic regularity inspired by the most lively devotion. The intensity of this devotion will differ, no doubt, in various souls. St. Bernard once saw an angel writing down the prayers of the monks, some with letters of gold, some of silver, others of black ink, or colorless water, according as they differed in value before God. But it is always a consolation for the weak and faltering to know that their prayer, united with and borne up by the strong, will reach the ear of God; just as their voices, chiming in with the rest, are wafted upwards in one common harmony. It is as when the eagle bears its young ones aloft upon its outstretched wings to accustom them by degrees to behold the sun.—From *A Day in the Cloister,* by Dom Bede Camm, O.S.B.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Spirit of the Divine Office.

THE subject of this paper presents a double aspect. We may consider the spirit in which the Office has been conceived or composed, and we draw thence certain conclusions regarding the spirit in which it should be recited.

1. The Office is, as its name denotes, divine, for it is the work of God, *opus Dei,* compiled from the inspired utterances of the Holy Ghost. By far the greatest part of our breviary consists of the Sacred Scripture—the Psalms, Canticles, lessons of the Old and New Testaments; while the remainder, written mostly by saintly Doctors of God's Church, comes to us under the sanction of an authority guided by the Divine Spirit. Thus writes the eminent Cardinal Manning:

"The Divine Office is a part of the divine tradition. It has been wrought together by the hands of men, but those men were saints, and their work was under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. The framing of the ritual may have been the work of human hands, but the materials of which it is composed are the words of the Spirit of God." It is *directly* divine in its *origin, principle,* and *object,* while in *form* it has *indirectly* the divine sanction.

From the beginning God appointed two forms by which man was publicly to recognize and worship Him; namely, by sacrifice and by prayer, by *act* and by *word.* In the Mosaic Law this worship was

chiefly sacrificial, but public and official prayer by the ministers of God also had its due place. The Patriarchs were the recognized representatives in this regard, and Moses also, as we read, taught the people the use of hymns and canticles.

In the days of Samuel there would seem to have existed in the Temple a choir-office, while in David's time various psalms were composed which were set to a special chant and choirs of Levites and musicians were appointed to sing them. Thus the *"sacrificium laudis,"* through vocal offices, was constituted by the ordinance of God, as the Royal Prophet avows: "I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord, in the sight of all His people, in the courts of the house of the Lord" (Ps. cxv. 17-19).

In the synagogues the same offices were carried out, and we may readily assume that Our Lord often joined in them at Jerusalem or Capharnaum and elsewhere, thus by His sacred presence sanctifying and consecrating these hours and forms of prayer.

Thence they were transferred by the apostles to the Christian Church for her *word* worship. So we find both in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles repeated mention of "the Prophets and Scriptures" being read in the Temple, of the faithful assembling there to unite in prayer and the "singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles." We need not therefore wonder at the Church's love and veneration for the Psalter, "which has led her to make it permeate and kindle every part of her liturgy, and has so transferred it from the worship of the synagogue to her own, that, to use a medieval metaphor, the trumpets of the tabernacle have given

place to the psaltery and song of the Christian ritual." *

The origin of the Office is then divine—its words are inspired, not indeed all in the same degree, but they are all, as St. Bernard calls them, *"voces Spiritus Sancti."*

The object of the Office is also divine; not only in that it makes for our sanctification, but also because its chief and primary aim is God and to Him it is immediately directed. Nor is it simply in the nature of a prayer that we must regard the Office. Prayer it is indeed, but much more—it is a special act of divine worship, not only in that God is served and honored by it; but in a deeper sense it is the work of His ordinance, the words of His Spirit, by which the Divinity, using human instruments, concentrates divine worship within Himself. As He has ordained the one great *act* worship, the clean oblation to be offered to His name from the rising to the setting of the sun, in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, so has He ordained that the *word* worship, the sacrifice of praise, should, through His Church, be perpetually offered to Him on high. St. Paul expresses this clearly when he says: "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise always to God, that is to say, the fruit of lips confessing to His name" (Heb. xiii. 15).

By the offering of the holy Mass, which is laid as a charge upon the Church, she adequately and fully pays the fourfold debt mankind owes its Maker and Sovereign Lord. In like manner by the holy Office she fulfils the same four ends of glorifying God, rendering Him thanks, appeasing Him, and asking graces needful for the world. Charged as she is with the duty of praise, thanksgiving, and supplica-

*Dr. Neale, *Notes on the Divine Office.*

tion to God, for and on behalf of all men, she has endowed her ministers with the privilege and duty of reciting the liturgical Office, emphasizing the importance of it, as well as her earnestness in the fulfilment of this duty, by enjoining under pain of sin that this alone of all their duties must be satisfied every day, and day by day. Such is the solemn duty of all those consecrated to her ministry. Her priests, in fulfilling their obligation, by this means become as the soul and voice of creation, or as "the angel with golden censer offering up the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne of God." They form the choir which voices creation's praises in a grand concert of harmony, everywhere in the identical form and accents of worship from the rising to the setting of the sun. Thus, without ceasing, the sacrifice of praise is joined to the sacrifice of the Eucharist, celebrating the perfections and benefits of the Divine Majesty, *"Dies diei eructat verbum, et nox nocti indicat scientiam."*

The liturgy is the collective utterance to God of the mystical body of Christ. It is not merely a private prayer, for the whole Church is the sanctuary, and "as we offer this prayer we are never alone," says St. Peter Damian, but united in worship with the whole choir of God's Church. We pray with and for the Church, speaking in union with the Incarnate Word. This is expressed in the preparatory prayer, *"Domine, in unione illius divinæ intentionis qua ipse in terris laudes Deo persolvisti."*

Christ came on earth to unite man to God, to be the type and model of perfection, which the creature might imitate, to pray in the highest sense of prayer. He came, the second Adam, to be the representative

of the children of the first Adam in a perpetual worship of God, and it is for the human race to unite itself with Him in this constant prayer. For this Christ fitted to Himself the mystic body of His Church, upon which, therefore, is the duty of perpetual, public, official prayer offered through her ministers.

The chief object, then, of the Divine Office and its excellence appears in this, "that it is from God, and puts us in communication with God. It is the sacred formula of those conversations with Heaven which are authorized by our ministry. It is the authentic and complete expression of praise, thanksgiving, and petition which we offer in the name of the faithful." *

2. From this idea of the sacred Office we may gather the spirit which must properly animate us in its recitation. We go before God as the organ of Jesus Christ, as the representatives of His Church charged with a sublime embassy, to treat of interests most precious, or to make reparation to the offended majesty of God, to make supplication for the graces of which the world is in need, or to offer praise to the Creator, and thanksgiving for infinite favors. What a spirit of piety, earnestness and fervor does not this object call for! Still more must we realize this if we recollect that we deliver our message in the words of His own Son; "for," writes the Abbé Gay, "we repeat the very prayers which Christ our Lord used in His pilgrimage on earth, which He uttered on His own behalf and ours, for the Psalter was His book of prayer." The Psalms indeed are in various ways the sentiments and expressions of Christ, who as the Messias was prefigured in the person of David, to whom most of these prayers are

*Father Kirwan, in *The Tablet*.

directly ascribed; and some of them were, we know, actually recited by the Son of God in the flesh, and uttered from the fulness of His Sacred Heart. A deep devotion and reverence for these sublime words but fitly characterizes our daily repetition of them. "If we keep vigil in the Church, David comes first, midst, and last. If early in the morning we seek for the melody of hymns, first, last, midst is David again. If we are occupied with the funeral solemnities of the dead, David is first, last, and midst. And not in the cities and churches alone, but in the forum, in the wilderness, and in the uninhabitable regions it is he who again utters the praise of God. In monasteries, among those holy choirs of angelic chanters, David is first, midst, and last. In the convents of virgins, where dwell the bands of those who imitate Mary; in the desert, where are men crucified to the world, and having their conversation with God, first, midst, and last is David. Others at night yield to the demands of sleep; David alone is active, and, congregating the servants of God into angelic choirs, turns earth into heaven and men into angels."

The true spirit in which our breviary should be recited is shown in the following extract from an admonition of Abbot Cisneros (A. D. 1500) to his monks: "What are we about to do, brethren, at the time of the Divine Office, unless it is to appear before the face of God and His holy angels, in the company of our just and holy brethren—*'in conciliis justorum et congregatione.'*" Then, after urging the necessity of prayer as an immediate preparation for the holy Office, he concludes, "Now at the sound of the bell, rising from prayer, we should say, This is the sign of the great King, let us go and seek His face, and offer Him gold, incense, and myrrh—the gold of devotion, the incense of reverent attention,

and the myrrh of manly and respectful demeanor." The holy Office unites us to Jesus Christ in a way that no other prayer can do. It breathes the spirit of holiness, because of this union, and therefore must make for holiness if rightly performed, for as the Psalmist says: "The sacrifice of praise shall glorify me, and there is the way by which I will show him salvation" (Ps. xlix. 23). In his *Mirror for Monks* Blosius warns his brethren: "In the holy Office have a care to pronounce and hear the holy words reverently, that you may taste how sweet the Lord is, and may feel that the word of God hath incomprehensible delight and power. For whatsoever the Holy Ghost hath dictated is indeed life-procuring food." Similarly, in Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* we read regarding the Office: "Said from a burning heart it giveth forth a fragrant smell before the face of the Lord Jesus, and before all the court of heaven it yieldeth grace unto Jesus, and receiveth grace in turn from Him; it maketh the soul familiar, and, as it were, companion with Jesus. Use it whosoever can, the work is good and grace-bestowing of itself; it is a rich offering and filled with all the fatness of devotion." For the production of such effects in the soul there is need of deep appreciation and piety; for where the Spirit of prayer is wanting, the soul does not perceive "those things which are of the Spirit of God." The mouth indeed speaks, but the heart is silent—*"tacui, dum clamarem tota die"* (Ps. xxxi.). And the pity of it is that we should so often spoil this grand prayer by entertaining sentiments directly opposed to it. We cry out with our lips that our souls thirst after God's presence, and find rest only in the sanctuary, and yet we come before Him with reluctance, and remain in His tabernacle only so long as our external ministry

obliges us to do so. Each day we proclaim those among us blessed who meditate on His law and sing His praises, yet we hurry through the Office without thought, and frequently our desire at the beginning of it is that we might have reached the end. The admonition which Holy Writ gives as to prayer in general is especially applicable to the Divine Office: *"Ne sit cor tuum velox ad proferendum sermonem coram Deo; Deus enim est in cœlo, et tu super terram."*

The old Saxon Saint, Ælfric, in his quaint style gives us the following lesson: "When we hear the bell ring calling us to Matins, we ought anon as true God's knights arise quickly and arm ourselves with prayer, haste us to the church, and there we ought to lift up the long spear of fervent desire of our heart to God, and draw out the sharp sword of the word of God, in His holy service, and smite great strokes of devout singing and saying thereof, whereby our enemies shall be rebuked, and we be kept in godly praisings under the banner of His protection." Such is indeed the character of the exercise to which our clerical profession calls us daily, and by which we are enabled to renew within us the spirit awakened by the innate virtue of the consecrated prayer of which Bishop Hedley writes with characteristic fervor: "O blessed words of the Psalms, which have been consecrated by the lips of the Saviour, which the apostles and martyrs have used, and in which the saints of all ages have lifted up their hearts to God! Blessed and fruitful words, which are continually resounding day and night all the world over, in emulation of the ever-increasing song of the angels and the blessed!"

To the worthy performance of our duty and privi-

lege in reciting the Divine Office, may we not fitly apply the words of St. Paul: "You are come to Mount Sion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels and to the spirits of the just made perfect"? (Heb. xii. 22.)

To discharge our duty well in the recitation of the Divine Office it is of the utmost importance to attend to the presence of God, "to begin the Office," as Bishop Hedley says, "to continue it, and end it, as if we were always in the sight of God and His angels." In the Office, attention is nearly sure to bring with it devotion. St. Charles Borromeo used to urge his priests to concentrate their attention carefully at the beginning of the Divine Office. He himself was accustomed to spend a quarter of an hour in mental prayer before beginning Matins and Lauds; and he advised all to renew their attention every time they said *"Deus in adjutorium."* It will help us much if we accustom ourselves to make an effective act of the presence of God whenever we begin to recite the Office.

For the purpose of keeping up attention during the progress of the recitation we may make use of various means.

We are not to be scrupulous about minute attention. If we read the words reverently, place and circumstances being such as to subject us to no unnecessary distraction, and our thoughts being gently constrained to union with God, it is enough to satisfy obligation. But the more actual devotion we can put into it the better. Thus we may take the words, or the general sense, of psalm and responsory, and apply them to the feast or the mystery of the day; or to Our Lord's Passion; or to God, our Father; or to our last end; or to the Blessed Sacrament; or

to Our Lady or the saint of the day; or to our sins, our wants, our resolutions.

Imagine how the Angel of the Schools must have lifted up his heart, while reciting the Divine Office. Hearken to St. Augustine in his *Confessions:* "Oh, how fervently I uttered my service to Thee, O my God, when I read the Psalms of David—those songs of faith, those breathings of piety! How I was set on fire by them, and how I burned to have them recited throughout the world, that they might bring the human spirit to Thy feet! How I wept over Thy hymns and canticles! The words of them streamed into my ears, and with them came the truth into my heart; and piety grew warm within me, and tears flowed, and it was very well with me then!"*

*From *The Spirit of the Divine Office*, by C. A. Wheatley, Kidderminster, England, in *The American Ecclesiastical Review,* June, 1904.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Mortification.—The Necessity of Mortification, and in What it Consists.

THE saints and all teachers of the spiritual life are unanimous in declaring that mortification is the preparation for obtaining the gift of prayer, and the means necessary thereto. As parchment is not fit to be written upon unless thoroughly clean, neither is the soul ready to receive the impression of Divine wisdom and of heavenly graces, before all sensual inclinations are rooted out. One of the ancient Fathers says: "As one can not see his face in muddy water, so the heart that is not purified from those earthly inclinations which constantly disquiet it, the heart in which vain and unseemly cares are not yet silenced can not possibly behold the face of God in prayer, that is, can not penetrate into the depths of His mysteries, and Almighty God will not reveal Himself to such a one." "The soul is like down," says one of the Fathers. "If it is perfectly dry and nothing clings to it, if it is free from dirt, it rises from the earth on the lightest current of air, it soars upward and floats on the breeze. But if it is wet or clogged by dirt its weight will not allow it to rise on high. It remains on the earth, sunk in the mud. It is the same with our soul. If pure and clean, it mounts on the sweet and gentle zephyrs of reflection and meditation. But if it clings with love to earthly things, if it is weighed down by passion and irregular desires, which prevent its rising heavenward, prayer becomes an impossibility." The Abbot Nilus says: "If it was forbidden to Moses to

approach the thorn-bush before having laid off his shoes, how can you attain to the sight of God and familiar communing with Him while you are full of those passions and inclinations that bring death to the soul?"

Mortification is, moreover, the fruit to be gained from prayer. The prayer that has not mortification for its sister and companion is looked upon by the saints as of doubtful value. As, in shaping iron, it is not sufficient to soften it in the fiery flames of the furnace, but blows of the hammer are necessary to give it the desired form; so, too, is it insufficient to soften the heart by prayer and devotion if the hammer of mortification, also, is not employed to free it from what is objectionable, and to impress the virtues upon it. The sweetness of prayer and the rapture of divine love serve to mitigate the pains of mortification, thus strengthening us to deny our own will and conquer the irregular emotions of nature. On the wings of mortification and prayer the soul soars heavenward.

Mortification consists in regulating and ruling our passions, our evil inclinations, and our disorderly self-love. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23). He who once lived riotously but now lives chastely and honorably is denying himself and taking up his cross. He who once knew no measure in self-gratification, who set no bounds to his indulgence, but now lives temperately, has taken up his cross to follow Christ. He who was formerly frail and fickle is now strong and constant, because he is taking up his cross daily. To deny one's self means to become another man. St. Basil calls attention to the fact that Our Lord begins His counsel with the words: Deny thyself, and, then only, follow

Me. We do the first by crushing self-will, by giving the deathblow to our bad inclinations and evil desires. If we wish to follow Christ we must prepare the way by means of mortification. As our Lord intimates, mortification is the foundation of the spiritual life. "Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus" (2 Cor. iv. 10). This is the cross that we must daily take upon our shoulders if we wish to follow Christ. Job says most truly: "The life of man upon earth is a warfare" (Job vii. 1), and the Apostle Paul declares: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: for these are contrary one to another, so that you do not the things that you would" (Gal. v. 17). This is the continual war which every Christian, and especially every Religious, has to wage against self. To overcome self, to bridle one's senses, to master one's passions, is far greater than subduing others to our will. On this point the Wise Man says: "The patient man is better than the valiant: and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities" (Prov. xvi. 32). As saints and spiritual writers declare: "All our progress, all our perfection consists in mortification." St. Jerome says: "In just the measure that you overcome self, will you advance in perfection." When some one was praising another in the presence of St. Francis Borgia, and declaring that he was a perfect man, the saint remarked: "That is true if he is mortified." Blosius compares a mortified servant of God to magnificent grapes perfectly ripe and sweet; but the unmortified to unripe fruit, green, hard, bitter, and unpalatable, as is said in Isaias: "I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes" (Is. v. 4). The difference between the children of God and the children of the world is that

the latter always allow themselves to be governed by their senses, and do not trouble themselves to practice mortification; but "they who are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal. v. 24). They are not ruled and guided by the flesh, but by the spirit and by reason.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Interior and Exterior Mortification.

THERE are two kinds of self-love, one good, the other bad. The good is that by which we aim at the end for which God created us, namely, eternal life; the bad is that by which we try to procure for ourselves the goods of this world to the injury of our immortal soul and the dishonor of God. "The heavenly city," says St. Augustine, "is formed by the love of God, even to the contempt of self; the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God." And Jesus Christ Himself has said: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself" (Matt. xvi. 24). The perfection of the soul consists in self-denial. He that does not deny himself can not follow Jesus Christ. Love becomes great as concupiscence grows less. Love is perfect when concupiscence dies; that is, the less man desires to satisfy his own inclinations, so much the more does he love God. But when he desires nothing outside of God, then he loves God perfectly. In the present state of our nature, tainted by sin, it is impossible to be entirely free from the temptations of self-love. The saints had to contend with their passions. A Religious, therefore, must be very watchful to regulate the disorderly emotions of self-love. This is done by the practice of interior mortification, which, as St. Augustine teaches, puts in order the movements of the soul.

How wretched is the soul that permits herself to be ruled by her passions! St. Bernard says that it is the enemy in one's own household who hurts

most. Satan and the world are our bitter enemies, but worse than either is our own self-love. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi says: "Self-love in the soul is like a worm gnawing at the roots of plants. It robs them not only of fruit, but also of life." With the Wise Man we must constantly pray to the Lord: "Give me not over to a shameless and foolish mind" (Ecclus. xxiii. 6). O my God, do not abandon me to my foolish passions, which will rob me of Thy holy fear, yea, even of my reason!

Our whole life must be a continued struggle. But he who faces the enemy should always be armed for self-defense. Let him discard his armor only for one day, and on that day will he be overcome. So it is with the soul. She must never cease to struggle against her evil inclinations, no matter how often she has gained a victory over them. Man's passions, frequently conquered though they be, never die. "Believe me," writes St. Bernard, "they spring up as often as cut down; and even if apparently rooted out, they grow again." All that we can obtain in the war with our passions is that their attacks become less violent, less frequent, and that by degrees we come to conquer them more easily. A monk once complained to the Abbot Theodore that, although he had combated his evil inclinations nearly eight years, he had not succeeded in entirely destroying them. The Abbot answered: "O my son, you are lamenting over a war of eight years! I have spent sixty years in solitude, and in all that time no day has passed on which I have not felt the resistance of my passions." Yes, our passions will always make themselves felt, but as St. Gregory says, it is something quite different merely to see the wild animals around us and to hear their roaring, from

keeping them in the house and indulging them to our own destruction.

Our heart is a garden in which wild and poisonous weeds are always springing up; consequently, we must have ever in hand the knife of holy mortification to cut them off, and root them out. If we neglect this, we shall soon find our soul overrun with noxious tares and thorns. "Conquer self!" this was the word that St. Ignatius of Loyola constantly repeated in his admonitions to his brethren. Conquer self-love, break your own will, for, as he used to say, "the principal reason that so few who practice mental prayer arrive at Christian perfection is because they take no care to conquer self." The saint placed more value on one act of mortification of self-will than an hour's prayer abounding in spiritual consolation. St. Francis Borgia used to say that prayer introduced divine love into the heart, but it was mortification that prepared an abode for it, by removing all earthly dross that could prevent its entrance. He who would draw water from a well must use an empty vessel, free from sand and dirt; else he would bring up no water, but mud. To make for our sanctification, prayer must be accompanied by mortification.

Interior Mortification.

There are Religious who are given to a multiplicity of spiritual exercises. They communicate frequently, make long prayers, perform fasts and other penitential works; but they neglect to conquer certain little passions, rising anger, for instance, aversion, curiosity, dangerous attachments, etc. They do not rule over themselves. They exercise but little self-control. They can not endure any kind of contradiction, they can not separate from certain

persons, they are not cheerfully obedient to all Superiors alike, nor peacefully submissive to the manifest will of God. What progress can such souls make in perfection? They wander far from the right path, they are always sunk in their own misery. If for every Christian it is a fault to seek only his own satisfaction in his actions, is it not a far greater one for a Religious since he has, in a very special manner, consecrated himself to the mortified, the perfect life? "God," says Lactantius, "leads man by mortification to life eternal." The devil, on the contrary, entices him to eternal death by the gratification of his inclinations. Even the holiest things must be undertaken without attachment of heart, so that if our cherished plans do not succeed, or if they are disapproved by obedience, we must be willing to resign them tranquilly. Every species of self-love hinders perfect union with God; therefore, we must be firmly resolved to combat our evil inclinations that they may not gain the victory over us. *Exterior,* as well as *interior,* mortification is necessary for perfection, though with this difference, that while the former is to be practiced with moderation, the latter requires no limitation. Of what advantage in the spiritual life is the mortification of the body if unattended by that of the interior passions? "What profit," says St. Jerome, "to castigate the body by severe fasts, if one is puffed up with pride—unable to brook an insult or a refusal?" Of what use is it to abstain from wine, and yet be intoxicated with anger against those that trouble or contradict us? With good reason does St. Bernard bemoan those Religious who are humble exteriorly, but who interiorly nourish their passions. They do not eradicate their vices; they only cover them up under the outward signs of penance.

If, on the contrary, we zealously practice mortification of self-love, we shall become saints in a short time without endangering health, without hazarding humility, because God alone is the witness of our interior acts. O what a beautiful harvest of virtues and merits might we gather if we suppressed self-will, curiosity, bitterness of heart, natural inclinations, levity, idle jests, etc. Provided no injury to the honor and glory of God is to be feared, we should readily yield in time of contradiction. In many ways we can daily practice interior mortification. A Religious receives a letter, for instance. The desire to read it instantly arises in the mind. Let him mortify that desire, that cry of nature, and postpone the gratification for a short time. A happy little jest rises to the tongue, a beautiful flower tempts the hand to pluck it, the eyes are attracted by some curious sight—be silent, refrain, turn away! A thousand such acts may easily be made each day.

Let us consider now a little more in detail how interior mortification may be practiced. The first step is to examine what passion reigns in the heart and frequently leads to a fall, that we may exert every effort to conquer it. St. Gregory says we must employ the same artifices to conquer Satan that he uses against us. He is constantly on the watch to inflame that particular passion to which we are most inclined. In like manner should we be on the alert to combat that same passion. When the ruling passion is overcome, all the others will surrender. But let that predominant passion remain master of the heart and perfection will never be attained. "Of what use are his powerful wings to the eagle if his feet are bound by a cord?" says St. Ephrem. Oh, how many Religious are there who, like the eagle,

would soar heavenward were they not tied down by earthly attachments! They can not advance in perfection, they are fettered to the earth. St. John of the Cross says that the least thread of attachment is sufficient to prevent the soul from rising to God. Not only does he who is ruled by passion make no progress in the spiritual life; but, what is far more deplorable, he runs the danger of being eternally damned. It is, therefore, a pressing necessity for Religious to control their predominant passions. Without that all other forms of mortification will be of little avail to their sanctification. Let us resolve, then, to fight against, to subdue the passion that has the greatest empire over us. A resolute will can, with God's help, which is never wanting to us, effect whatever it takes in hand. St. Francis de Sales was very much inclined to anger; but by the self-control that he faithfully practiced he became a model of kindness, patience, and meekness. His sweetness has won for him the title of "The rose among the saints." Almighty God furnished him with numerous occasions for the practice of meekness and humility by allowing him to be attacked by calumnies, insults, and contempt. Then it was that he manfully overcame himself, and put to death his ruling passion of anger. When the chief of our interior enemies is laid low we must turn our weapons against the others; for a single one continuing to hold sway in the soul might cause its ruin.

Another important consideration is the necessity of waging war against our passions while they are still in their infancy, as it were, for if they become strong by long indulgence it will be very hard to overcome them. It may happen on the occasion of some slight offence that we feel tempted to reply

by a cutting word or contemptuous gesture. The inclination must be restrained at once; from a little wound neglected is soon formed an abscess which can not be healed. St. Dorotheus relates the following anecdote of a good old monk. He commanded one of his disciples to pull up a tender young cypress by the roots. The youth accomplished the task with great ease. Then the old man ordered him to pull up a larger one. But for this his most strenuous efforts were in vain. Seeing this, the monk thus addressed his young disciple: "Know that it is just so with our passions. It is easy to root them out in the beginning, but very difficult when they have, by long indulgence, sunk deep in the soil of our heart."

Consider the mortification of self-will in particular. Nothing is more injurious to Religious who have consecrated their will to Jesus Christ than to follow their own will and inclinations. It is against self-will, the arch-enemy of the spiritual life, that they have fortified themselves by the *vow of obedience*. No one can separate us from Almighty God, neither our fellow-beings on earth nor the demons in hell. But what creatures outside of us can not do, our own self-will can effect. "Self-will destroys virtue," says St. Peter Damian, and St. Anselm remarks that as the will of God is the source of all good, so the will of man begets all evil. How can things go well with him who confides in a master devoid of reason? St. Bernard says: "Whoever constitutes himself his own master and simply follows the dictates of self-love submits to a fool." Self-love, according to the Abbot Antony, is a wine that intoxicates, so that we recognize neither the worth of virtue nor the deformity of vice.

St. Augustine remarks that the devil became such only by his own will. The devil makes use chiefly

of self-will in order to plunge Religious into eternal ruin. Cassian relates that the holy Abbot Achilles was asked one day by a disciple with what weapons Satan fought against Religious. He answered. "The evil one employs against the great ones of the world, pride; against merchants and business men, avarice; against the young, the temptations of the flesh; but against Religious, his most effective weapon is self-will. It is by this that he generally conquers." The Abbot Pastor used to say, as Rufinus relates, that if we follow our own will the devil no longer struggles with us, for self-will has itself become a devil more malicious than all others. St. John Climacus declares that a Religious who, instead of obeying, despises the guidance of Superiors, a Religious who is bent on guiding herself, needs no devil to tempt her, since she exercises toward herself the office of the tempter.

The Holy Ghost admonishes us on this point: "Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will" (Ecclus. xviii. 30). This admonition principally applies to Religious who have sacrificed self-will to God by vowing obedience to Superiors and the Rule. As God ought to be the only object of the love of a Religious, so is obedience the only way to obtain that love. The actions of a Religious derive their greatest value from being performed in obedience. On the contrary, the greatest faults in the actions of such persons are the offspring of self-will. Trithemius insists that the devil hates nothing more than the practice of obedience. When St. Francis de Sales was drawing up the Constitutions for his Religious of the Visitation, some one suggested to him that it would be advisable to let his daughters go barefoot. The saint replied with a smile: "You may begin with the

feet, but I shall begin with the head." St. Philip Neri, laying four fingers on his forehead, used to say to his penitents: "All holiness is comprised in the breadth of four fingers." The saint meant to imply that sanctity consists in the mortification of self-will. St. Jerome wrote: "Thy virtue will increase in proportion as self-will declines." St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was accustomed to say that, to insure a blessed death, we must permit ourselves to be guided simply by Superiors. Mortification of self-will should be the chief aim of every Religious. He that is unmindful of this point deserves not to be called a Religious, but a sacrilegious person. Can there be in truth a greater sacrilege than to take back the will once dedicated to Almighty God? St. Bernard's words corroborate this assertion. He says: "There is no greater sacrilege than to snatch from God the will once sacrificed to Him." The Holy Ghost tells us by the mouth of Samuel that it is a species of idolatry to prefer self-will to obedience: "It is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel; and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey" (1 Kings xv. 23). St. Gregory applies these words especially to disobedient Religious when he says: "Those Religious who trust in their own self-love, who follow it, and who resist the commands of Superiors, in a certain way commit the crime of idolatry, for they adore their own will as their God." St. Paul, therefore, orders those monks who are self-willed to be separated from the community like lepers, because their bad example is infectious.

The Religious who want to become holy according to their own ideas are they who, as Isaias tells us, will say to Jesus Christ on the Day of Judgment: "Why have we fasted, and Thou hast not regarded?" (Is. lviii. 3.) We have fasted, we have

performed penitential works, and Thou hast no regard to them. What answer will they receive from the just Judge? Ah! He will tell them that they need hope for no reward for such works, since they were performed, not according to the will of God, but merely by their own caprice. "Behold on the day of your fast your own will is found" (*ibid.*). "O what an evil is self-will!" exclaims St. Bernard. "What is good becomes evil, if performed from self-will, and contrary to obedience." On the other hand, the strongest assurance that a soul can have that her actions are pleasing to God comes from their being performed in obedience. Nicephorus relates that the Superior of Simon Stylites, who led so extraordinary and penitential a life, standing day and night on a pillar under the open sky, wished to convince himself whether his manner of life was pleasing to God. To what test did he put him? He commanded the saint to come down, at once, from his pillar, and live like the other monks. As soon as St. Simon heard the order, he began to descend from his pillar. Then were addressed to him the words: "Father, remain where you are, for now we know that it is God's will for you to persevere in your penitential exercise." We, too, must desire holy things, but without attachment to self-will. Let us recall the saying of St. Francis de Sales: "I desire little, and that little I desire very little." By these words the saint gives us to understand that he did not desire anything through self-love, but only for the good pleasure of Almighty God. He was prepared to resign any undertaking as soon as he saw that it was not in accord with the holy will of God. St. Peter Damian writes: "He casts aside a heavy burden who renounces self-will." "What tyrant," continues the saint, "is so cruel

toward Religious as the self-will by which they are ruled? Their desires can not be gratified in the convent; therefore those unhappy souls are restless and dissatisfied, often experiencing in themselves a little hell." St. Eutychius says: "Of what use are exterior silence and retirement if the heart is a theater in which the passions are engaged in a fierce struggle? Outwardly there is peace, but inwardly raging storms."

"Whence proceeds our unrest," asks St. Bernard, "but from attachment to our own will?" The ancient Fathers were accustomed to say that a monk who knows not how to overcome self-will can never persevere in the religious life; or if he should persevere, it would be without interior peace and without progress in virtue. Attachment to self-will is the secret of unhappiness among so many Religious. Let us hear what St. Magdalene of Pazzi said in one of her ecstasies when speaking of the damage inflicted by self-will on Religious. "I see," said she, "a crowd of souls. I see one who, when she receives Thee, O sweet, Eternal Word, is interiorly recollected. But within an hour she has lost her peace of soul, her serenity of mind, if things do not go in accordance with her desires. I see another all on fire with holy love during Mass; but soon after, if told of a fault, she loudly proclaims her innocence and in so doing displays pride and self-love. I see another who, it would seem, wishes to rival St. Antony in austerity of life. But should obedience forbid her penitential works, she becomes obstinate, she will not submit. Another appears grave and mortified in the refectory, but she takes complacency in her mortifications. She would love to be looked upon as better than her neighbors. If she is treated with some little consideration, she says her Sisters are too in-

dulgent; but if she feels the lack of anything she looks upon herself as neglected. Another is ever on the watch to display her learning. One might think that she excelled St. Augustine in knowledge. Her speech is full of subtlety, by which she hopes to make her perfection shine forth. Another is always ready to renounce her own comfort in the service of her Sisters; but then she wants to be praised and flattered for it." It was of such souls that Our Lord said to the saint: "They desire My Spirit, but they desire it in such a way as is pleasing to themselves. They thereby become incapable of ever receiving it."

They who wish to become saints and to enjoy true peace must earnestly strive to renounce self-will at every turn, and to be faithful to every iota of the Rule. This is what they do who aim at perfection—nothing for their own sake, but all to please God. In this way they put aside their vain desires and inclinations. Worldlings are ever on the alert to gratify self-will, but the saints watch to mortify it. Yes, they seek opportunities to deny themselves. St. Andrew Avellino, as we read in the breviary, made a vow always to resist self-will. Let us, at least, daily practice a certain number of acts of self-denial. Let us reflect that in the practice of obedience we gain more than from many penitential works and pious exercises prompted by self-will. St. John Climacus says: "Let no day go by without trampling under foot your own will. The day upon which you are not faithful to this advice will be a day in which you are not a Religious." St. Magdalene of Pazzi looked upon as lost the day on which she had not conquered in some way her own will. St. Catharine of Sienna heard these words from Our Lord: "Think of Me, and I

will think of thee; think of doing My will, and I will think of what is for thy good."

Lord, give me courage to break my will in all things, to trample upon my own desires. In all that I do I will think only of doing Thy will.

Exterior Mortification.

There is no escape for us. We, poor children of Adam, must wage a continual war till death —"For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh" (Gal. v. 17). Either the soul will rule the body, or the body the soul. We must, therefore, treat our body as a rider his unmanageable horse. He holds it in curb constantly, that it may not throw him. To those sensual men who ridicule the servants of God for mortifying the body, St. Bernard makes reply: "We are cruel only to our body when we torment it with works of penance; but you are far more cruel to yourselves when you satisfy the concupiscence of the body, in that you doom it, with the soul, to everlasting pains in eternity." A very pious hermit who practiced numberless penitential exercises gave a wise answer, as Father Rodriguez tells us, to those who asked him why he so persistently mortified his body: "I torture that which tortures me." Similar to this was the reply of the Abbot Moses to him who censured his severity: "When my passions rest, then shall I, also, rest. When my flesh no longer torments me, then I shall cease to torment it."

The objection that perfection is not attained by the castigation of the body, but by the mortification of the will, is irrelevant. Although of a very delicate constitution, St. Aloysius had so great a desire for corporal mortification that he eagerly sought after penitential works. Some one re-

marked to him one day that sanctification does not consist in such austere exercises, but in the denial of self-will. The young saint wisely replied to the objection in the words of the Gospel: "These things you ought to have done, and not to leave those undone" (Matt. xxiii. 23). The saint wished to say: "Yes, it is necessary to mortify self-will, but the body, also, must be mortified in order to restrain it and subject it to reason." It is in this spirit that the Apostle cries out: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27). St. John of the Cross says of those that are enemies to penitential works, of those that even assume the guidance of souls, though despising mortification of the body and advising their penitents against it: "Believe not those teachers that cry out against mortification of the flesh. Believe them not, even if they should corroborate their teaching by miracles."

St. Peter of Alcantara often addressed his body in these words: "Rest assured, my body, that in this life I shall give thee no peace. Here on earth thou must expect only sufferings and torments from me. But if we get to heaven, thou shalt enjoy a rest that will know no end." The *Lives of the Saints* abound with anecdotes regarding the penitential works performed by the heroic champions whose deeds they record. In view of what the Saints have done, we ought to be ashamed of our reluctance to mortify ourselves, our tenderness toward our rebellious flesh. We read in the lives of the fathers of the desert of a famous monastery whose inmates never tasted meat, nor fruit, nor wine; some took food only every evening, others only after a severe fast of two or three days. All were clothed in garbs of penance, in which they even

took their rest at night. We can not, indeed, demand such austerity of the Religious of our day. But would it be too much for Religious to make use of the discipline once a week? To wear a little penitential cord? To abstain occasionally from fruit and sweetmeats? To fast every Saturday on bread and water, or, at least, through devotion to Mary, to be satisfied with one dish?

"But," it may be objected, "I am sick, and my confessor has forbidden me works of penance." Very well! Be obedient, but accept patiently the sufferings and inconveniences connected with your sickness, and support cheerfully the discomforts of the weather, of excessive heat or cold. If you can not chastise the body with self-imposed penances, refuse it, at least, some lawful satisfaction from time to time. When St. Francis Borgia went hunting with his falcon, we are told that, at the moment it seized its prey, the saint cast down his eyes, thus depriving himself of the satisfaction the sight would have given him. St. Aloysius, also, condemned himself not to glance around when present at court festivals. Why can we not perform similar little acts of mortification? If the body is refused lawful gratification, it will never demand the unlawful. They, on the contrary, who seek after all lawful enjoyments, will not be slow in allowing themselves some that may be unlawful. Forbidden joys will rise up to tempt them; will they be strong enough to reject them?

We must be careful, while curing bodily ills, not to become sick in soul. He will always be sick who does not mortify the flesh. St. Bernard says: "I compassionate the maladies of the body, but far more those of the soul." O how often does some trifling indisposition serve as an excuse for a self-

indulgence in no wise necessary! St. Teresa very earnestly exhorted her Religious on this point. She says: "One day we absent ourselves from the Office because we have a headache; the next, because we have had it; and the third, for fear that it may return. We have not entered the convent to indulge ourselves, but to die for Jesus Christ." St. Bernard severely censured those that take inordinate care of their health. "They are the scholars of Galen and Hippocrates," he said, "and not the disciples of Jesus Christ. It is far better for the peace of your soul that you shun all singularity not absolutely necessary, and follow the community." St. Basil, also, admonished his Religious to be as much as possible content with the common life.

To be satisfied with the ordinary fare and not to ask for exemptions from the Rule is far better than long fasts and severe disciplines. It is an incongruity to practice such penance and then to demand special privileges in regard to food and clothing. It is just in this way that tepidity enters into many religious houses. O let us be on our guard not to jeopardize health of soul and even the crown of life by being too solicitous for the welfare of the body.

Let us resolve, also, to bear sickness patiently, for otherwise we shall derive little or no profit from it. Accept with equanimity, also, the mistakes or the carelessness of physicians and nurses. Do not complain, do not find fault. We read in the life of the Abbot Stephen, one of the fathers of the desert, that, being sick on one occasion, his attendant made him a cake. But instead of using the proper oil in its preparation, he took linseed oil by mistake, which is very bitter. The Abbot took the cake presented him, ate a piece, and said not a word. Again the Brother made a cake and with

the same oil. When the Brother perceived that the Abbot merely tasted it, he said: "Father, do eat the cake. It is good," and, to encourage him, he took a morsel himself. But finding how bitter it was, he almost lost his senses from fright, and cried out: "Lord, have mercy on me! What have I done!" The good Abbot tried to pacify him, saying: "Be not troubled, my son! it was God's will that you should make this mistake. No harm will come from it." Let us, then, patiently accept sickness. It will lead us to spiritual perfection far more surely than any voluntary works of penance.

The mortification of the flesh keeps it from revolting, as the Wise Man says: "He that nourisheth his servant delicately from his childhood, afterwards shall find him stubborn" (Prov. xxix. 21). O how conducive to the welfare of the soul are restraints imposed upon the body and its senses. They prevent sensual joys, which wound, and often kill, the soul. "The wounds of love," says Origen, "often prevent those of the body from being felt." By mortification here on earth we can atone for our sins, and discharge the temporal punishment due to them. He who has offended God must, even after the remission of his sins, satisfy Him by temporal punishment; and he who fails to make such satisfaction in this life must do so in the next by enduring the pains of purgatory, whose intensity is infinitely greater than any that can be imagined on earth. "They . . . shall be in very great tribulation, except they do penance from their deeds" (Apoc. ii. 22). When suffering of any kind comes upon us, let us endure it patiently, if not joyfully. Let us imagine that it is going to be prolonged fifteen or twenty years, and let us encourage ourselves with the thought: "This is my purgatory.

Not the body, but the spirit shall be victorious." Finally let us act in accordance with the following suggestion of St. Francis de Sales: "The mortifications which come to us from God, or from men by His permission, are more precious than those which are the offspring of our own will. Hold it as a rule, that the less we do from choice or our own taste, the more we shall find in our actions of goodness, of solidity, of devotion, and of profit."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Mortification of the Senses and Human Suffering.

THE following conference of Père Eymard was addressed to his Religious, the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament. On account of its forceful thoughts on mortification, it recommends itself to all Religious, in particular at the opening of the Lenten season:

We have said that it is necessary to give one's heart to God, that He demands it absolutely for Himself; but, that this gift of the heart may be unremitting, a constant attitude of soul must be maintained of offering one's self to Him by a love of generosity and sacrifice. This love is the spirit of penance, the mortification of love. It is the true road to holiness. All without that is trifling, ways more or less flowery made only to amuse. All other means are child's play in the service of God.

1. Now, in order to belong entirely to Our Lord, it is absolutely necessary to dedicate to Him our body and our senses, and to do that we must be their masters. Cost what it may, we must have in our own keeping the keys of our house; we must hold our body under the empire of duty, of the will, and of the grace of God.

The body has neither intelligence nor faith; therefore the will must rule and lead it. It is a beast, which yields only to blows. It does not know sobriety and honor, it cares not for virtue, and of its own disorderly nature it obstinately tends to its own satisfactions. It seeks the sensible good, its own good, and with all its strength it rushes to the

gratification of its own desires. If reason opposes it, it tries to elude it and attain the object of its concupiscence in spite of remonstrances. It is a hard struggle, and if, unhappily, the spirit connives with it, we are lost. This is the reason that interior mortification is not sufficient.

The body must be kept in subjection that it may not betray us. One with a very strong will backed by a very great love might, perhaps, reach sanctity without great bodily mortification; but, as a general rule, the soul is safer behind closed gates and well-guarded ramparts.

The evil man ought to be continually repressed, kept down, mortified, because he has only brutal instincts. The spirit ought to be directed, elevated to God; the body subjected and mortified. It is not necessary to constrain the spirit, to stifle it by fear, but to direct it constantly to God.

The will, which is the royalty of man, should have for only end the will of God, and be constantly united with and submissive to Him. The will should be the mistress of both the mind and the heart. It is the sovereign, and it can do all with the grace of God. The Christian will is admirable. Clothed with the strength of God Himself, it knows no obstacle; for God is with the will to conquer when the will is with God to be submissive to Him.

In all his epistles, St. Paul inculcates the crucifixion of the flesh, of the senses, of the old man. It must be reduced to slavery. He will never be a man of virtue who has not gained the entire mastery over it. In that consists the exterior exercise and the proof of the virtue of mortification.

2. There is rampant in the world a heresy that works serious ravages with morality. It teaches that there is no such thing as original sin. The body

as well as the soul, it says, is in its natural rectitude. All their instincts are, then, good, and they must be gratified. Thus does this heresy legitimatize the most deplorable excesses. If there was no fall, what need of reparation? Thus it denies the necessity of Christian mortification. This error has glided even into piety. It has invaded the direction of souls, veiling itself a little, of course, and not exposing its principles so openly as to arouse distrust. We read in books and we hear certain confessors say that exterior mortification is not necessary. To this we reply: Mildness belongs to Almighty God. It is for Him to insinuate His sweetness into the soul in order to encourage and recompense; but it is for man to cooperate by mortifying and crucifying himself. He has been condemned to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow. The earth is accursed for him, creatures are a continual occasion of sin for him. He must separate from them in order not to rest in them and prefer them to God. How can he reach this point without the mortification of the senses?

Let us remark that man is constantly drawn down by the body. The vices of the soul are materialized, as it were, in the senses, and become more tenacious and culpable. If we gave them not that exterior life, they would more quickly die.

Thus pride which is not allowed to manifest itself by vanity, by seeking the first places and honors, soon disappears. By rejecting praise and the exterior marks of vanity, we stifle pride in itself.

What shall we say of the other vices, of anger, sloth, and above all, of the shameful vice? Do they not seek to make their seat, their center, in the senses? The body is their pleasure-ground. They feed on it, live on its sensations. They cast in it their deep roots.

Hear St. Paul calling for the chastisement of its members, chastising his body, that body of death: "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members" (Rom. vii. 23, 24). "But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27). The great Apostle gives this beautiful definition of the Christian: "He is a man crucified in his flesh, and living of the virtue of the love of God." This speaks of corporal mortification for all men. It is an echo of the Precursor of Our Lord—"Do penance and turn from your evil ways! Bring forth fruits worthy of penance"—that is, expiate by humiliation, by fasting, sackcloth and ashes, the sins of your senses. As guilt has appeared, so let these fruits of penance appear. The Church, inspired by Our Lord, exacts corporal penance—fasts, public prayers, solemn expiation. This authority speaks loudly against the doctors of sensualistic piety. Conversing with a visitor in the parlor, we tarry some minutes after the bell has rung in order not to appear rude, or to show more respect and deference to our friend. But the good God who calls us! Ah, well, He will wait.

Again, we want to be treated like princes. Nothing must be wanting to us. We must be served promptly, and comfortably cared for. The religious life is a Calvary, a school of suffering, but some wish to make it a bed of sloth. As soon as anything is wanting, they become impatient, they murmur. They proclaim their rights. They have them always in hand like a buckler. Were we so well off before entering Religion that we never wanted for

anything? Perhaps we sprang from a laboring family. In our childhood we had to work hard to help gain bread for the rest. Have we entered religion to fare better than in our own home? Better a hundred times had we remained where we were!

Let us persevere. The religious life is a death, but a death that leads to life. Let us look upon it as such, and may the love that crucified Our Lord fasten us to the cross with Him!

3. Corporal mortification is, then, lawful and even necessary. It is for all times and all persons. Let us practice it, for we have need of it. We shall adduce some fresh motives. Our body is evil, infected by sin, and full of wicked instincts. It must be purified and restored to health by a tempest of blows, just as the sick are purged to carry off violently the bad humors gathered in them.

We have sinned not only in our origin, but actually by our actions, by our senses. We must, then, renew them in the mortification of Jesus Christ, for we have corrupted an already vitiated nature.

Every sin deserves a punishment equal to its malice. The voluntary reparation ought, then, to be equivalent to the punishment that justice demands. If we have committed one single mortal sin, we have deserved hell. How shall we indemnify for our escape from hell?

Should we have only venial sins, how shall we compensate for the flames of purgatory?

God has pardoned us, it is true; and we are restored at once to the joy of the angels as if we had never sinned. But the satisfaction—who will make that?

We ought to have our sins always before our eyes, to do penance for them; for true conversion consists not only in never again sinning, but in re-

pairing the evil we have done. Let us purify ourselves, or God will purify us by His chastisements either in this life or in the other. Because we fail to do penance He Himself often puts His hand to the work. Look, we say, at such a person! How greatly he suffers, how much he is persecuted! He does not deserve it. It is indeed possible that his afflictions may be a test of his love, but frequently they are the expiation of his sins. God is making him do penance because he forgets his debt to His justice.

Temptations assail us, and we suffer. They are long and wearying; they are a real torture, we say. But have we never consented, never committed sin? Let us expiate now. God is inflicting the chastisement that we have not had the courage to inflict on ourselves. But is it well to have temptations? Yes; it redeems the past and keeps us humble. It makes us do penance and forces us to struggle when we would rather rest.

There is, above all, a kind of trial that brings much suffering, namely, persecutions and calumnies that come from good people. Nothing gives so much pain. God sometimes permits the very best people to make a mistake in their judgments, and persecute us in spite of our innocence in order to purify us more perfectly.

Sickness and physical sufferings are another form of corporal expiation which God imposes. We do not seek them any more than temptations and persecutions. But if they come we must thank the mercy of God for them. He is making us do penance now that He may spare us later.

Lastly, it is not sufficient to embrace works of corporal mortification because we have sinned. That is simple justice. That is not enough. If we want

to do only that, it was hardly worth our while to enter Religion. And, besides, this penance is all for ourselves. It is to make us escape future pains and procure our salvation.

We must have the mortification of Jesus Christ, who chose suffering not through necessity, but through love, because He saw in it the means of demonstrating more clearly His love for His Father and for us. This mortification should be considered a virtue to be acquired. We should say: "Even had I no sin to expiate, I wish to mortify myself, because Jesus Christ has given me the example. He was scourged and crucified, He endured hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness with joy for the love of God His Father. I wish to do as He did."

This is the true, the beautiful motive of mortification. Let us embrace it. Let us clothe ourselves with the garments of Jesus Christ, in which alone shall we be pleasing to the heavenly Father, that is, the robes of mortification and crucifixion.

4. How shall we practice this virtue? By never seeking enjoyment; by depriving our body of all that in which it would take pleasure; by never seeking our own satisfaction, neither in self nor in creatures; by never desiring the praise of men; by mortifying our appetite, not so much in the quantity as in the quality of our food; by embracing, with permission, the corporal mortifications and humiliations so loved by the saints. We may do all that without falling sick, we may be sure.

Let us do it, then. Without it, all our professions of love for God are but illusions; and were it not that God knows our ignorance they would be insults.

Some say that it is hard to mortify one's self continually. We know it. But we must carry our cross

daily, we must constantly have our sword in hand. Our debts can not be paid with sentiments and words of love, but with penance. That is the money of Calvary.

In the first place, we must perform all the mortifications of our state of life. They oblige before all others, and it would be wrong to neglect them for others. After that we must be on the lookout for penance. We must be ingenious in punishing self, in immolating our body to God by sacrifices incessantly renewed.

Supplementary extracts from other spiritual writers are here appended for the reader's reflection on the subject of

Human Suffering as a Source of Merit and Blessings.

Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C., in *De Torrente,* says:

"The right view of suffering is that of an expiation, not only for our own sin, but for the world's sin too. It is an expiation and a redemption, whereby the effects of sin are wiped away, and the creation is again to become a kingdom of God. All suffering centers in the supreme tragedy of Calvary, and when borne in a Christian spirit may be called a continuation of that divine sacrifice whereby the world is cleansed of its stain.

"Wherefore as regards those who suffer: if they rebel against their lot, they are as those who deny their corporate responsibility and shirk their burden; they are traitors not only to the divine Redeemer, but to all suffering humanity. But if they accept the chalice of pain as Christ accepted it, they become truly compeers with Christ in the new kingdom of God, 'sitting at His right hand and at His left,' ac-

cording to their merit. These are truly the co-workers of Our Saviour in the regeneration of the world. The innocent babe that dies in agony gains something of the martyr's glory; its suffering is the payment of a debt not its own, and yet its own because it is one of mankind; and it becomes more closely allied to Christ because of its suffering. The man or woman consciously accepting the cross, with perhaps its nameless horrors, becomes thereby a leader among men, because bearing willingly the burden of men; and according to the simplicity of their acceptance is the degree of their eternal glory. No wonder then that so many Christians have regarded it as a privilege to suffer, and have envied those who suffered, not from morbid sentiment, but from a healthy recognition of Christian principles. 'These are they who have washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb. Their youth is renewed like that of the eagle; as the lily shall they flourish in the city of the Lord.' "

Commenting on the words of Jesus to His disciples: "My chalice indeed you shall drink," Father Gallwey, S.J., writes in *The Watches of the Passion:* "To His chosen ones, to those to whom He afterwards said, 'I will not now call you servants, but I have called you friends,' the grand and special promise that He makes is this: 'You shall, I promise you, before you die, drink of My chalice.' To His own most blessed Mother, as they conversed together in Nazareth, this, doubtless, was the assurance that He often repeated in order to console her, that she should be with Him to the end, and share His bitter chalice to the dregs. His golden promise afterwards to St. Paul was, 'I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake' (Acts ix. 16).

"How blind, then, are we if we believe that every suffering is a calamity and a proof of God's wrath, and that prosperity is a sure sign of His favor!

"(*a*) He sends suffering in His mercy to atone here for past sin, to do here quickly the slow work of purgatory;

"(*b*) He sends suffering also to prevent sin, and to draw us out of sin, as suffering brought the prodigal home to Him;

"(*c*) Lastly, He sends suffering to His chosen ones as to St. Paul; and these chosen ones then become, like Himself, Saviours unto many."

Commenting on the words of Jesus regarding the illness of Lazarus: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God; that the Son of God may be glorified by it," the same author writes: "He said to the messengers from Mary and Martha, 'This sickness is for the glory of God.' The sick and the sorrowful and the suffering so often jump to the conclusion: 'This trouble is sent me as a chastisement'—and they despond. So, too, we are apt to judge of other sufferers. Thus, when the disciples saw the man born blind, they at once asked: 'Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his father, that he should be born blind?' (John ix. 2.) We come into the world with a disease upon us, which inclines us to believe without doubting that poverty, sickness, pain, and disgrace are always curses, and a chastisement of sin. It takes a long time and much labor and a strong grace to convince us that if, for Himself and His Mother, Our Lord selected poverty and pain and the bitter chalice, these things must surely be something better than curses. 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.' What a golden lesson for the sick! This sickness is sent that the Son of God may be glorified in you. You

would prefer health, but you will give great glory to your Creator and your Father in heaven if you reverently say: 'Father, not my will, but Thine be done!' Fix well in your mind how very much Our Lord is glorified by the patience of the sick and the charity of those who nurse."

St. Francis de Sales says, in *The Mystical Flora* (translated by Clara Mulholland): "As the juice of the vine, if left in the grape too long, corrupts and is spoiled, so the soul of man, if left in its pleasures, in its desires and longings, becomes corrupted; but if crushed by tribulation, it gives forth a sweet beverage of penance and love.

"Lilies that grow among thorns are the whitest; roses near a stream smell the sweetest, and get the scent of musk. 'What doth he know that hath not been tried?' (Ecclus. xxxiv. 9.)

"This life is such that we must eat more wormwood than honey. But He for whom we have resolved to cherish holy patience in the midst of all our troubles will give us the consolation of His Holy Spirit in His own time.

"The crown of the bride ought not to be softer than that of the bridegroom. 'As the lily is among thorns, so is My beloved among the daughters' (Cant. ii. 2). It is the natural place for this flower; it is the fittest also for the spouse.

"It is a good omen for this soul that she has suffered many afflictions; for, having been crowned with thorns, we must believe that she will be crowned with roses.

"How blessed are those who rejoice in afflictions, and who change wormwood into honey! When persecutions and contradictions threaten us we must retire with our affections under the shadow of the holy cross, by a true confidence 'that to them

that love God, all things work together unto good.'"

Father Joseph Egger, S.J., in *God and Human Suffering,* tells us: "As a strong antiseptic prevents the growth of germs of disease, so suffering checks the taint of base and selfish feelings, which so easily insinuate themselves into our hearts, and impair the purity of our motives and intentions. Suffering chastens the soul and its aspirations, the mind and its views, the heart and its affections. Whatever tends to free us from selfish motives must help to increase the merit of our thoughts, words, and actions.

"Suffering increases merit by insuring not only greater purity, but also greater earnestness of motive. It has a bracing influence upon the will, and gives tone and vigor to its exercise. Difficulties and sufferings bring out manliness and strength of will and nobility of soul. They try earnestness of purpose. They are an unmistakable test of solid virtue. There is beauty and merit in each least aspiration of virtue breathed on the playful wing of joy, but there is greater and more solid merit in the depth and vigor of determination evinced in the practice of virtue under difficulties, temptations and trials. There is no trial, temptation, or suffering which can not be turned into a blessing by the will of a conscious sufferer."

Bishop Hedley says, in his *Retreat:* "As we learn from the saints, suffering gives a certain kind of intensity to acts of the will which nothing else can give. It is this which recommended it especially to a Heart desirous of proving to men the reality and the depth of its love. 'The first cause of the Passion' [of our Lord], says St. Thomas Aquinas, 'was that He wished it to be known how much God loved

man.' It is not difficult to understand the connection. An act of the will, or, as we say, of the heart, may be strong and intense; but unless it is done under stress of pain, it is wanting in a certain species of intensity. There are numbers of pious hearts who have been turned away from God by suffering. Self and its claims to attention have been too strong; and then piety has given way to self-pity, to murmuring, to resistance, to bitterness. It is thus with many who have to undergo punishment, with many of the young, unless their punishment is judiciously managed, and they are induced to accept it.

"Punishment and pain in general, far too frequently, embitter the heart, turn it from its last end, and harden it in perversity. But if a man under suffering have the light and the grace to accept it in submission, in resignation, and with a closer movement to the bosom of our heavenly Father, then never, never has his love of that Father in heaven been more thorough, more effective, and more intense. It need not be added that this mysterious element of suffering with which Jesus willed to raise to a whiter heat the acts of His Sacred Heart, is also marvelously adapted to draw to Him the hearts of all men."

Our Blessed Saviour knew that sorrow, sufferings, and tribulations would come to some extent into every man's life; He knew that there was love and wisdom in all of God's dispensations, though hidden at times under rude appearances; He came in His love to suffer for our salvation, but also to give us an example how to bear our sufferings, how to view them and how to profit by them; He came in His love to show us how to weave, with our bleeding fingers, out of the thorns which sin has sown on earth a crown of eternal glory for ourselves.

Thomas à Kempis, in *The Following of Christ*, says in reference to "the royal way of the cross": "To many this seems a hard saying: 'Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow Jesus' (Matt. xvi. 24).

"But it will be much harder to hear that last word: 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire' (Matt. xxv. 41).

"For they that at present willingly hear and follow the word of the cross shall not then be afraid of eternal condemnation.

"Take up, therefore, thy cross and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting.

"He is gone before thee carrying His own cross; and He died for thee upon the cross that thou mayst also bear thy cross and love to die on the cross.

"Because if thou die with Him thou shalt also live with Him, and if thou art His companion in suffering thou shalt also partake in His glory (2 Cor. i. 7).

"Behold the cross is all, and in dying to thyself all consists, and there is no other way to life and to true internal peace but the holy way of the cross and of daily mortification.

"Go where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, and thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below than the way of the holy cross.

"Dispose and order all things according to thy will and as seems best to thee, and thou wilt still find something to suffer, either willingly or unwillingly, and so thou shalt still find the cross. For either thou shalt feel pain in thy body or sustain in thy soul tribulation of spirit. Sometimes thou shalt feel abandoned by God, at other times thou shalt be afflicted by thy neighbor, and what is more, thou shalt often be a trouble to thyself. Nor

canst thou be released or relieved by any remedy or comfort, but needs must bear it as long as God wills.

"For God would have thee learn to suffer tribulation without comfort, and wholly submit thyself to Him, and to become more humble by tribulation.

"No man hath so lively a feeling of the Passion of Christ as he who hath happened to suffer such like things.

"The cross, therefore, is always ready and everywhere waits for thee.

"Thou canst not escape it, whithersoever thou runnest; for whithersoever thou goest thou carriest thyself with thee and shalt always find thyself.

"Turn thyself upwards, or turn thyself downwards; turn thyself without, or turn thyself within thee, and everywhere thou shalt find the cross.

"And everywhere thou must of necessity have patience, if thou desirest inward peace and wouldst merit an eternal crown.

"If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee and bring thee to thy desired end—to that place where there will be an end of suffering, though here there will be no end. If thou carry it unwillingly, thou makest it a burden to thee, and loadest thyself the more, and nevertheless thou must bear it. If thou fling away one cross, without doubt thou shalt find another and perhaps a heavier.

"Dost thou think to escape that which no mortal ever could avoid? What saint was there ever in the world without his cross and affliction? Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself was not for one hour of His life without the anguish of His Passion. 'It behooved,' said He, 'that Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead, and so enter into His glory.'

"And how dost thou seek another way than this

royal way, which is the way of the holy cross? The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom, and dost thou seek rest and joy?

"Thou errest, thou errest, if thou seekest any other thing than to suffer tribulations; for this whole mortal life is full of miseries and beset on all sides with crosses.

"And the higher a person is advanced in spirit, the heavier crosses shall he often meet with, because the pain of his banishment increases in proportion to his love.

"Yet this man, thus many ways afflicted, is not without some allay of comfort, because he is sensible of the great profit which he reaps by bearing the cross.

"For while he willingly resigns himself to it, all the burden of tribulation is converted into an assured hope of comfort from God.

"And the more the flesh is brought down by affliction, the more the spirit is strengthened by inward grace. And sometimes he gains such strength through affection to tribulation and adversity, by his love of conformity to the cross of Christ, as not to be willing to be without suffering and affliction; because such a one believes himself to be so much the more acceptable to God the more grievous and greater things he shall have endured for His sake. This is not man's power but the grace of Christ, which can and does effect such great things in frail flesh, that what it naturally abhors and evades it now, through fervor of spirit, embraces and loves.

"To bear the cross, to love the cross, to chastise the body, and bring it under subjection; to fly honors, to be willing to suffer reproaches, to despise one's self and wish to be despised; to bear all adversities and losses, and to desire no prosperity in this

world, are not according to man's natural inclination.

"If thou look upon thyself, thou canst do nothing of this of thyself.

"But if thou confide in the Lord, strength will be given thee from heaven and the world and the flesh shall be made subject to thee.

"Neither shalt thou fear thine enemy, the devil, if thou be armed with faith and signed with the cross of Christ.

"Set thyself then like a good and faithful servant of Christ, to bear manfully the cross of thy Lord, crucified for the love of thee.

"Prepare thyself to suffer many adversities and divers evils in this miserable life; for so it will be with thee wherever thou art, and so indeed wilt thou find it wheresoever thou mayst hide thyself.

"It must be so, and there is no remedy against the tribulation of evil and sorrow but to bear them patiently.

"Drink of the chalice of thy Lord lovingly if thou desire to be His friend and to have part with Him (Matt. xx. 22).

"Leave consolations to God, to do with them as best pleaseth Him.

"But prepare thou thyself to bear tribulations, and account them the greatest consolations; for the sufferings of this life bear no proportion to the glory to come (Rom. viii. 18), although thou alone couldst suffer them all.

"Know for certain that thou must lead a dying life, and the more a man dies to himself the more he begins to live to God.

"No man is fit to comprehend heavenly things who has not resigned himself to suffer adversities for Christ.

"Nothing is more acceptable to God, nothing more wholesome for thee in this world than to suffer willingly for Christ.

"And if thou wert to choose, thou oughtst to wish rather to suffer adversities for Christ than to be delighted with many comforts, because thou wouldst thus be more like unto Christ and more conformable to all the saints.

"For our merit and the advancement of our state consist, not in having many sweetnesses and consolations, but rather in bearing great afflictions and tribulations.

"If, indeed, there had been anything better and more beneficial to man's salvation than suffering, Christ certainly would have showed it by word and example.

"For He manfully exhorts both His disciples that followed Him and all that desire to follow Him to bear the cross, saying: 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me' (Luke ix. 23).

"So that when we have read and searched all let this be the final conclusion, that 'through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God' (Acts xiv. 21)."

CHAPTER XL.

Silence.

NOTHING makes a deeper impression upon outsiders visiting a monastery or a religious house than the silence that prevails within its sacred precincts. The silence of its halls and corridors, even of its courtyards and gardens, fills them with awe and edification. Seculars coming to a convent are so impressed with this silence that they feel as if they were breathing the atmosphere of another world, as if they were inhaling a fragrance wafted from heaven. A high value has been placed on the conscientious observance of silence in accordance with the holy Rule by the saints and founders of Religious Orders.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis de Sales, and other Saints have remarked that if silence is observed in a convent you may rest assured that religious discipline is flourishing there. Furthermore, they state that if the reform of a religious community is desired, one of the most important things to be insisted on is the strict observance of silence. Silence is prescribed in religious houses because without it the proper discipline can not be maintained, and because it is necessary as a preparation for prayer and meditation. Silence preserves peace. Silence fosters recollection and devotion and disposes the soul to a more intimate union with God. Conscientious observance of silence makes a Religious eloquent in conversation with God. In his excellent work, *The Spirit of Sacrifice*, Father Giraud makes the following reflections and practical suggestions on regular silence:

Regular silence, as its name indicates, is that which is enjoined by the Rule. Different names are given to it. There is the strict or great silence and habitual silence; silence in word and silence in movements. In the same way there are some special places where, in their different degrees, silence must be kept more rigorously than in others; for instance, the church, the choir, the refectory. We shall now proceed to speak of exterior silence, viewed under these different aspects.

1. The great silence. This is the silence enjoined on the Religious during the closing hours of the day, the whole of the night, and the next morning until after the meditation or after holy Mass, if Mass follows immediately upon the meditation. It is called the great silence because it must not be broken without a good reason, and the strict silence because it must only be infringed for a serious matter. It is also called sacred because it is closely allied to mental prayer. St. Jerome expresses this in the wording of his Rule: "The holy hermits who dwell in the desert keep the sacred silences (*sancta silentia*) most scrupulously on account of their being the source and parent of holy contemplation."

There is something solemn in the strokes of the bell which gives the signal in religious houses for the commencement of the great silence. From the moment it is heard not a sound breaks the stillness of the monastery; its inmates move about with a grave, composed demeanor, the doors are opened and shut carefully and noiselessly. It is as if the spirit of God, penetrating and taking possession of the heart of each one, verified in a striking, nay, a visible manner the words of Elias on Mount Carmel: "The Lord is not in the earthquake." "The Lord

will bless His people with peace" (3 Kings xix. 11; Ps. xxviii. 11).

These tranquil evening hours and still watches of the night are seasons of special benediction. The rest which the body takes is emblematic of the soul's repose, when she detaches herself more fully from created things and gives herself more completely to God, saying with the Psalmist: "In peace in the self-same I will sleep, and I will rest" in my God (Ps. iv. 9). The night prayers or the Psalms recited in Compline are specially conducive to recollection; the points of meditation which are given to the community or read by each one individually, according to the custom of the house, furnish the soul with holy thoughts, and the Religious retires to rest, his mind still dwelling on the salutary truths he has just heard. The morning's meditation may be said to be commenced overnight. He says with the spouse in the Canticles: "I sleep and my heart watcheth." On awakening in the morning his first thought is of the presence of God. The silence observed by the whole community acts as a safeguard against temptation to voluntary distractions, and when all are assembled in the choir for the first common prayer of the day, one might imagine that heaven had come down to earth to offer to the God of infinite majesty the praise and thanksgiving which are His due.

Let us always entertain the greatest respect for the silence which is truly sacred, the time for which is filled up with occupations of a heavenly nature. Some fervent Religious have been known to perform acts of heroic patience to avoid breaking that silence. Every monastery records some instance of this kind. It is said that a Visitation nun who fractured her arm just after the great silence commenced preferred to suffer excruciating pain rather than call

one of the Sisters to her assistance. This is somewhat overstrained; we must admire and not imitate as St. Francis de Sales would have said. In fact no one could fail to admire fortitude and endurance of so high a degree, nor can one help admiring Mère Emilie, who on hearing one of her daughters groaning at night in acute pain went to her and sat beside her several hours, endeavoring to soothe her and divert her from her suffering by reciting edifying and interesting anecdotes. Toward a novice who wilfully violated the Rule Mère Emilie acted very differently. A young novice, only sixteen years old, forgot herself so far as to say something calculated to make the others laugh, while feigning sleep. She was obliged to confess her fault in the refectory. "Sister," the Mother Superior said to her, "you are partly to be excused on account of your youth and your ignorance. Had you fully realized what you were doing, you would have deserved a severe punishment. I hope this will be the last as it is the first time so thoughtless an act occurs in our monastery. In reparation, you will eat your dinner on your knees for a fortnight, and meanwhile pray God to give you a sense of your duties, to make you love and respect silence, and respect your fellow-Religious, too." No virtue is at variance with the others; charity and silence can go hand in hand.

2. Habitual silence. This consists in not speaking without necessity except at recreation. The Rule which enjoins this practice also indirectly prohibits any noise calculated to disturb the quiet of the monastery.

If this silence is scrupulously kept, the monastery is like a holy temple where the presence of God is felt. The venerable foundress whose words and example we delight in quoting speaks thus of her first

companions in the infancy of her Congregation: "It was really touching to see how scrupulously they kept the Rule of silence; even in sickness they avoided breaking it, asking as far as possible by signs for whatever they might want. Such profound stillness reigned throughout the whole house that when M. l'Abbé Marty, our spiritual Father, crossed the threshold, he stopped short, and struck with admiration, said under his breath: 'This is an earthly paradise! All lips are silent, all eyes cast down.'"

There are, however, circumstances when it is possible, even necessary to speak; when duty, charity, courtesy, or some pressing want obliges us to break silence. On such occasions the following rules should be followed:

1. Never speak without permission, if it is possible to ask it.

2. If we have not time, or are otherwise unable to go and ask for this permission, let us not take it for granted without good and solid reasons.

3. Let us do our utmost to postpone until recreation-time what at first seemed necessary to say at once. Some persons, not excepting Religious, are so unable to restrain their tongue that they mistake for motives of necessity, good breeding, or charity, what is in reality want of mortification and levity.

4. It must not be forgotten that the Rule of silence is no less obligatory in our intercourse with our Superior than with the other members of the Community; that is to say, in either case one must have a proper reason for breaking the silence.

5. When such a reason exists, let us be brief. More urbanity of manner and fewer words would be a double advantage; charity and silence would both gain thereby. Garrulity impoverishes the soul.

If we knew how pernicious this is, we should try to be laconic in our speech and only say what was necessary.

6. Not only let us be sparing in words, but speak in a low tone. If it is true that a hallowed silence ought to prevail in the monastery the habit some people have of raising their voices seems almost a desecration of the religious tranquillity which is so pleasing to God.

7. In any case let us be very careful not to cause disedification to any one. St. Paul says: "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things do not edify" (1 Cor. vi. 12; x. 23).

8. We are sometimes advised to make use of signs instead of words if a sign will answer our purpose. This advice is good, as it often serves to prevent an infraction of the Rule. At La Trappe, as is well known, the monks employ no other method of communication. But it is obvious that the sign must express our meaning if it is to be of any use. Here we shall do well to recall St. Chantal's wise remark; "Never make use of signs to the Sisters in the time of silence which are not intelligible. It is much better to say a few words, if necessity requires, than to make a number of signs which fail to convey your meaning and perhaps only confuse the Sisters and cause them great distractions."

Such are the rules which it will be found useful to follow for the perfect observance of exterior silence. But besides the silence in word, there is the silence in our movements. The rules that provide for this are the same as the rules of religious modesty; yet we think it wise to remind the reader of them, lest anything essential to the practice of regular silence should be omitted.

1. In your general deportment avoid a hurried manner, which may have a disturbing effect on those around you. I will give a few details on this point which those who are really in earnest will not consider too minute. There is a way of walking, a way even of using one's handkerchief which does not correspond with the tranquillity of the monastery. There are certain expressions of the countenance and restless movements of the body which are anything but signs of recollection of heart, and are a fertile source of distractions to those who witness them. Can you imagine Our Lord or His blessed Mother behaving thus?

2. Open and shut doors and windows with simple, calm, attentive care, to avoid making a noise. Do not push or pull tables and chairs, or any piece of furniture you want to move, but lift them, or get somebody to help you place them elsewhere. By this holy poverty will be the gainer as well as silence.

3. If a doctor, a man of business, or workmen have to be admitted into the house, you will find there is a simple, unaffected way of behaving, decorous and courteous withal, which, without actually asking them to be quiet, will make outsiders feel that they must be careful not to disturb the tranquillity of the monastery more than need be. How greatly it is to be desired that every Religious should be imbued with profound respect for the silence of the Rule!

Silence ought to be more strictly observed in some places than in others: the church, the chapter-room, the dormitory, the refectory. We will say a few words on this point.

1. The church, the choir, and, in a lesser degree, the sacristy. Is it necessary to explain why silence

is to be especially kept in those places? Certainly not. Cassian praises the monks of Egypt for their strict observance of this rule; for in all this numerous assembly of men, he says, one would think there was but one present, the one who, standing in the middle of the choir, sings the psalm. No one coughs, no one heaves a sigh; and a severe punishment is inflicted on any one who breaks the silence.

2. The dormitory. We have already said enough on the reason why silence is enjoined in the dormitory, when speaking of the great or strict silence.

3. The chapter-room. This has always been held in respect by religious communities, for it is there that they receive counsels, encouragements, salutary reproofs which keep them up to the standard of their vocation; there by self-accusation and the penances given them they expiate their offenses, unhappily only too numerous, against the Rule.

4. The refectory. The refectory of a religious house might almost be regarded as a temple, since in it the Religious offers to God a great number of sacrifices by the mortifications he practices, and the penances, self-imposed or otherwise, which it is customary in most monasteries to perform there. The monks of old were strict observers of silence in the refectory. An ancient writer thus describes the manner in which the Egyptian cenobites held their repasts: "The silence that reigns in the refectory is so profound that among all the monks present—and they are a goodly company—not one is found who ventures to speak a word to his neighbor, or indeed to make any noise whatsoever. When a dish is to be brought in or removed, the monk who presides at the table intimates this by a gentle rap; his voice is rarely heard." The rule of silence at table is respected in all fervent communities, unless it is set

aside for an adequate reason or by some provision of the Rule itself.

The manuals of direction usually enjoin the careful observance of silence in the corridors and on the stairs, for the sake of the general edification.

Finally, in regard to keeping silence in the infirmary, we will quote the following wise remarks which breathe the spirit of faith: "Permission to go to the infirmary must be asked for the sake of visiting the sick out of kindness, and saying a few words to them about holy things. The infirmary is in a certain sense sacred; Our Lord often hallows it by His presence. It might justly be called the antechamber of heaven, for so many of our Sisters have departed thence to enter upon eternity; thence they have winged their flight, as we confidently hope, to the realms of everlasting bliss. Could we allow idle or frivolous conversation in such a place? No, let all we say in the infirmary be on some pious theme. Unless we are on our guard, it may easily become a snare to us, the source of irregularity and sins of the tongue. Alas! we know what St. James says: 'If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man' (iii. 2)."

CHAPTER XLI.

Fraternal Charity.

Of the Necessity of Mutual Love and Union.

To love God without loving one's neighbor is an impossibility. The same commandment enjoins both the one and the other. "And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother" (1 John iv. 21). But why must we love our neighbor? Because our neighbor is loved by God. Therefore did the holy Apostle declare: "If any man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." Jesus Christ says that He looks upon the love we bear to the least of His brethren as given to Himself. Now, these brethren of Our Lord are our fellow-men, our neighbors. "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me" (Matt. xxv. 40).

But this gracious daughter of God, holy love, being disowned by worldlings, seeks a refuge in the cloister. How sad were it even unable to find an asylum there! As hatred alone reigns in hell, so love alone reigns in heaven. There the saints all love one another; each rejoices over the happiness of the others as over his own. And the convent in which love holds sovereign sway—what a beautiful heaven! It is the object of the divine complacency. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. cxxxii. 1.) Almighty God looks down with pleasure on those houses in which He sees the Religious living to-

gether in peace and harmony, having but one end in view, namely, to serve God, and all lovingly helping one another on to eternal salvation. How can we hope to be united in Our Father's house after this exile, if we now live in disunion? Fraternal charity was the principal fruit of the Redemption foretold by the prophet Isaias. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb: and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. . . . They shall not hurt, nor shall they kill" (Is. xi. 6). The Prophet means by those words that the followers of Christ, no matter how varied their character, inclinations, and nationality, will live together in peace, since every one will support his neighbor in charity. What does the word community signify, if not that the same desires and inclinations animate its members? Love is the common bond of union. Love makes them bear with one another, yield to one another; and love is strong as death, as the Holy Scriptures tell us.

Religious call one another by the endearing title of brother or sister. Though not related by the ties of blood, they are truly brothers or sisters by the intimate love that ought to bind them together. All founders and foundresses of Religious Orders have on their death-bed so earnestly enjoined fraternal charity on their sons and daughters, because they knew that where union does not reign God is not found.

St. Augustine says: "When you see that the materials of which a house is built, the stone and mortar, etc., are holding together fast, you enter that house without fear of its falling. But if the walls are crumbling, you do not venture to set foot in it." The saint wishes to imply by these words that blessed is the religious house in which all are united in holy love, but unhappiness dwells in that which is

the home of discord and disunion. Such a convent may be called a hell on earth. It is no longer a house of God, for Satan is its master; no longer a house of salvation, but a home of perdition. What advantage is it for a convent to be rich and powerful, for it to possess a magnificent church, to be surrounded by gardens and orchards, if love and union have fled from its precincts? Such a convent is surely not a haven of rest. If discord has crept into your convent, bemoan it before God with tears, and beg Him to stretch forth His almighty hand for the removal of the evil! That almighty hand is required to put down factions and remove dissensions that have once sprung up in a religious community. Let us do all in our power to remedy the evil; let us spare ourselves no trouble. But if it is altogether beyond our control, let us, at least, keep our own soul in peace. Let us refrain from taking part in so great an evil to the general welfare, yes, let us turn away from it as we would from an atmosphere of pestilence.

Those Religious who burn with zeal for the maintenance of the holy Rule and religious discipline are surely not to blame. Such zeal for the good of the community marks the followers of Jesus Christ the adherents of His party. The spirit of Christ breeds zeal for religious discipline, zeal for the glory of the house of God. If some violation of Rule has slipped in, let us not hesitate to unite with the zealous lovers of holy discipline to root it out. Even should others forsake us, even should we stand alone, we must defend the cause of God. The Lord will certainly reward what is done to keep up strict observance of Rule. To be careless and indifferent in this regard is not a mark of virtue. It is not humility, but cowardice;

it is a want of virtue and the love of God. When we speak of factions, we refer to those that are formed from interested motives, such as, one's own advancement in position, particular friendships, the humbling of some, especially those in authority, whom we do not care for, or even the avenging of punishment formerly received, and similar so-called injuries. Factions of this nature must be shunned as the bane, not only of the religious, but also of the Christian life. Self-interest ought never to domineer in the heart of a Religious, for charity and the general good demands its total sacrifice. When St. Gregory of Nazianzen saw the Bishops wrangling on his account, some being in favor of his becoming their Patriarch, others not, he thus addressed them: "My dear brothers, I desire that you live in peace with one another. If otherwise peace and concord can not be established among you, I will resign my bishopric." The saint actually carried out his determination. He left his see of Constantinople, and withdrew to a hermitage, where he closed his days in peace.

To symbolize the order and union that should reign in a convent, the ancient Fathers made use of a lyre with many strings. If all are tuned in unison, if all are in accord, they form sweet melody, they give forth harmonious sounds. But let one of the strings that span the lyre be tuned too high or too low, harmony becomes discord, melody ceases. So it is in a religious community. One single member not in union, not in harmony with the Superior, is sufficient to destroy the unanimity, the peace, of the whole body. Reflecting on this symbol of the lyre, some spiritual writers have said: "Concord is derived from *chorda,* the string of a musical instrument." But more correctly, and more to our purpose, may

we say that it comes from *cor,* the heart; for in concord (*concordia*) all have but one heart, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles: "And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul" (Acts iv. 32).

Let us be very careful to preserve mutual love and union, for on them depends the safety of the Order. St. Bernard says: "As into a vessel at sea the water enters either because the boards are loose or but thinly pitched, so does a Religious Order go to destruction if its members are not firmly bound together by the cords of holy charity." On the night before His Passion, our dear Redeemer, in the prayer that He made to His Eternal Father, petitioned for us this union as necessary for our eternal welfare. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me: that they may be one as we also are" (John xvii. 11).

One of the means by which a Religious may maintain peace and charity with all the members of her community is that which the Apostle most earnestly enjoined on his disciples in these few words: "Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience" (Col. iii. 12). He says: "Put ye on," that is, clothe yourselves with charity; for as a Religious always wears the habit of her Order, as it covers her entirely, so must she in all her actions show forth holy charity, must, as it were, be entirely clothed with it. The Apostle further enjoins: "Put ye on the bowels of mercy." The Religious must not only be clothed with charity, but she must be animated by a real and heartfelt compassion for her neighbor. She must bear toward every member of her community a love most tender, as if specially attracted to that one. Behold

the passionate lover! How does he think and speak of the beloved one? Does he not rejoice in the welfare, is he not troubled at the misfortune, of the one so dear to his heart? Does he not make both her joys and her sorrows his very own? If the object of his affection should commit some little indiscretion, with what warmth does he not defend, or at least excuse, it! If, on the contrary, his beloved achieves some great work, performs some noble deed, how loud the praise with which he exalts her to the skies! The passion of natural love effects all that. Now, what passion does for others must, among Religious, be the result of holy fraternal charity.

Let us cultivate mutual charity in *thought,* as well as in *word* and *deed.* As regards thought, let us reject every suspicion, every mistrust, every rash judgment. We can not look into the heart. Appearances frequently deceive us. The holy Gospel warns us: "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven" (Luke vi. 37). God alone knows the secret and hidden things of the heart. He commands us, therefore, not to presume to judge such things. St. Paul admonishes us in these words: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own lord he standeth or falleth" (Rom. xiv. 4).

"Do you not judge within yourselves and are become judges of unjust thoughts?" asks the Apostle James (ii. 4), and the Wise Man says of those rash judges: "Like a soothsayer and diviner, he thinketh that which he knoweth not" (Prov. xxiii. 7).

"Charity thinketh no evil" (1 Cor. xiii. 5), says the Apostle. St. Jane de Chantal used to say: "We must look for the good, not for the evil, in our

neighbor." St. Augustine remarks: "Should you be deceived and disappointed in your neighbor, should you take something for good that in reality is bad, be not troubled about such errors, for charity is not vexed when she finds herself deceived; she rejoices in having harbored kind thoughts even of the wicked." We should be very reserved, also, in searching into the actions and faults of others. Above all, let us never imitate those who want to know all that is said about them. This gives rise to suspicion, which soon turns into bitterness, and ends in dislike for others. Things repeated are generally distorted and falsely related. Should we hear, perchance, that some one has spoken of our faults, let us give it no thought, much less ask who has said it. Let us act conscientiously and always conduct ourselves in such manner that only good can be said of us, and then let the censorious talk as they will. If we hear that they unjustly attribute some fault to us, we can accept the remark with silence, or we may simply say: "God will judge me on that point!"

Beware of nursing any spiteful joy at the mishaps of your neighbor; suppress every unkind feeling that arises; be noble and generous in thought as well as in deed. We must also rejoice at the prosperity of our neighbor, allowing no feeling of envy to lurk in our heart, even if his good fortune stands in the way of our own.

What is said by the author of *General Principles of the Religious Life* on the conduct of monks toward the fellow-members of their Order is equally applicable to the members of a religious sisterhood:

1. The lives of Religious in a community should resemble the lives of the saints in heaven. These all view and honor each other in God. Look upon all

with whom you are living as you would upon the saints if they came down to you from heaven. You will thus find nothing in your neighbor to criticise; on the contrary, everything will seem good, despite unfavorable appearances. As often as you feel yourself disturbed by a grave suspicion, take care not to consent to it, but turn your eye upon yourself, humble yourself before God, in the remembrance of your own faults, and cry out from the depth of your soul: O God! be merciful to my proud, sinful soul, that has every reason to cast herself at the feet of those whose judge she would presume to be.

2. Speak of your fellow-Religious respectfully, and let it never occur to you to indulge in private gossip with any one soever, or to listen to evil reports about others. In general, be scrupulously careful not to spread rumors about the one or the other, which might rupture the peace of the community, and diminish the cordial affection among your brethren. A defamer makes a breach in the ramparts of the most God-fearing community; a slanderer undermines the whole edifice; while he that spreads discord pulls it down to the very foundation.

Be warned not to contradict any one except when evil is approved; nor persist in defending at the expense of charity an affair of yours about which there happens to be question; rather submit your judgment to that of others. If it is necessary to maintain your opinion, advance your reasons with moderation, not that your superiority may be acknowledged, but simply that the truth may prevail. A quarrelsome person is like an ill-natured cur, that flies at everybody. He is universally shunned for his pains.

3. If you notice a failing in your fellow-Religious

which the Superior alone can remedy, you are bound to notify him of it, else you become chargeable with the fault and its consequences. But take care not to inform against him with deceitful intention, or from jealousy, revenge, or other passion. Make sure of all you want to say, and add nothing untrue, otherwise you become guilty of the odious sin of calumny —truly an abomination. A good Religious who, with a view to the amendment of his fellow-Religious, informs the Superior of their failings diminishes rather than magnifies a fault, and renders valuable service to each of the members and to the community as a whole. For any one to pursue a different course would be to disturb religious harmony, and to expose his own soul to the danger of being lost.

4. Try to be as keenly alive to the misfortune and success of your fellow-Religious as to your own; be glad at what gladdens them, grieve at what gives them pain, and do your best to console and cheer them. As the monastic family is a body whose head is Jesus Christ and whose members are the Religious, it is proper that the brethren share joy and sorrow in common, and give expression to mutual sympathy. When one member of the body suffers, all the other members suffer, unless they are themselves diseased or dead.

Shun with care all natural aversions and special friendships. They are two equally dangerous outgrowths of corrupt nature; two very catching moral diseases, all the more dangerous for God-fearing communities that they force an entrance into the breast by the most seductive of sensual charms, against which ordinary care is not a sufficient safeguard. It is refreshing to know that a Religious had the courage to rend the strong ties of flesh and

blood which held him bound to the nearest and dearest of kin in order to embrace a life of mortification and self-denial for Christ's sake; but how sad the plight if afterward that Religious allows himself to be enslaved with coward soul by the wretched tyranny of particular friendship! There is inspiration in the thought that his ardent soul was not satisfied with merely the perfection of ordinary Christians, which prescribes the love of enemies, but that with holy impatience he generously embraced a life which calls for the highest perfection attainable. But oh! the shame to see that once heroic soul turn traitor to his grand resolve—harboring aversion for a fellow-Religious, and loathing the very sight of him! "The illustrious of Israel are slain upon thy mountains. How are the valiant fallen!" (2 Kings i. 19).

5. Do not give way to envy if a fellow-Religious enjoys greater confidence than you and is preferred; and give no place to jealousy if he receives greater marks of respect and affection. Rather suppress the first emotion of self-love at once; thank God from your heart for the graces He bestows on others, and beg Him to preserve and increase these graces in them, if it redounds to His glory and their welfare. What a deep and tender mystery this, to acquire merits so rare with little risk and labor! Brotherly love is that mysterious philosopher's stone which changes the veriest dross into purest gold; while envy is that deadly bane which changed the beautiful natures of Lucifer and his lightsome host into foulest and most loathsome demons.

6. Of the many opportunities that a Religious finds to practice heroic virtues and lay up great merits for heaven, one of the commonest is to accommodate himself to the various characters he has to associate with in a large community, and to bear with patience

their manifold infirmities—to rejoice with the gay, to weep with the sad, as far as this is possible without offending God. Cordial sympathy, it is true, comes harder to a Religious than fasting, the discipline, and similar painful exercises, because of the steady violence he has to do himself in thus adapting himself to the characters of others. But for this very reason the practice is all the more meritorious and pleasing to the divine majesty. God freely communicates Himself to the soul who for love of Him tries to become all things to all men.

7. It would be a serious defect in a religious house, and a sure sign of its approaching ruin, if the younger members made light of the older and did not heed their wholesome admonitions. But in the same way the older members would act very wrong if they corrected their younger brethren as if they were children, and treated them as servants. The younger brethren owe their elders sincere and profound respect, but the older members owe the younger brethren tender and respectful affection in return. Age deserves to be respected on account of the virtues it has acquired by long and painstaking labor, and youth deserves an equal measure of affectionate regard because of its exertion to become perfect.

8. Be on your guard against certain indelicate and childish familiarities, which pass with the coarse and uncultured, but are ill-suited to the refined spiritual instinct and sensitized conscience of well-disciplined religious souls. Of such a nature are address by given name alone, or by nicknames and pet names, laying hold of others in a rude way, offensive to religious modesty, indulging in wanton or endearing speech. Such familiarities never last long. Besides, they have their seat in fickleness of

character or an untempered cast of soul. When once they have taken root they are the source of untold evils. It is an old saying and true, that familiarity breeds contempt, contempt breeds discord, and discord breeds destruction.

Do not try to discover Religious who will flatter you or who would be likely to humor your natural, undisciplined ways. Make it a point rather to discover those who will correct you in charity, and will not bear to see the least imperfections in you without offering you a remedy. Look upon flatterers as your secret enemies, who will some day be the first to expose and condemn you, as even now they already condemn you in their heart. Regard those who correct you as your friends, who love to work at your sanctification. The difference between friendship and flattery is this: friendship offers its services to benefit others, while flattery offers its services to benefit self.

9. A Religious worthy of the name, like a harmless dove, is a stranger to spite, and never resents an injury, much less does he entertain ill-will toward his tormentors. To leave no doubt in their mind of his kindly feelings toward them, he seems rather to bear many a wrong from them cheerfully. Such is his desire to suffer and to imitate the example of his divine Master. Do you wish to become like this model Religious?—and why should you not, since with God's grace, which will not be denied you, you certainly can become like him. Choke off, then, at once, all feelings of dislike in the very start, and be guided in this by lofty motives. When unavoidable frictions do occur, humble yourself and be the first to ask pardon, though you are least in fault. Pray specially for those who by their ill-will give you the occasion for numerous merits, and make it a special

point often to oblige them and anticipate their wishes. To return good for evil is peculiar only to Jesus and His faithful disciples.

Religious orders flourish and maintain themselves as long as mutual regard and affection are preserved intact. It has always been a matter of common belief that God is served best where men love one another best.

The following reflections from Father Lasausse's charming little volume, *A Happy Year,* will serve to emphasize what has been said on fraternal charity.

"Charity to our neighbor," says St. Vincent de Paul, "is a sign of predestination, because it shows we are true disciples of Jesus Christ. This divine virtue it was which caused Jesus Christ to lead a life of poverty and to die naked on a cross. For this reason, whenever we find an occasion to do something for charity, we should thank God." And St. Teresa says: "Jesus Christ so loved our neighbor as to give His life for him. Our Saviour rejoices when we sacrifice ourselves to do him good. Everything we do for our neighbor to please God, to show our love for Him, is most agreeable to Him. Oh, if we understood well of what importance is the virtue of charity to our neighbor, with what zeal would we not perform acts of this virtue!"

St. Magdalene of Pazzi was accustomed to say that she considered as lost the day in which she did not exercise some charity for her neighbor. St. Vincent de Paul lived but for this. He never lost an opportunity for practicing this virtue.

Tertullian relates of the first Christians that they loved one another so perfectly that the pagans were in admiration, and said: "Consider how the Christians love one another, how they respect one an-

other, how attentive to do a service for each other even to die one for the other."

St. John the Evangelist, according to St. Jerome, in his old age, being no longer able to walk, was carried in the arms of the disciples to the assemblies of the Christians, and from the weakness of his voice he could not make long discourses. He contented himself with saying: "My little children, love one another." Some wearied, perhaps, at hearing the same words, murmured, saying: "Why do you always give us this advice?" He made this reply, so worthy of him: "It is the precept of the Saviour; if you observe it, it is enough."

St. Jane Frances, desiring that all the actions of her daughters might proceed from a spirit of charity, had inscribed upon the walls of the halls through which they most frequently passed the qualities which St. Paul gives to this sublime virtue: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not; dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil." If it happened that one of her spiritual daughters failed in charity, she sent her to read this sentence, which she called the *mirror of the monastery.* She often read it herself in their presence, then turning to them with face burning with love, she would say: "If I should speak with the tongue of an angel, and have not charity, I am nothing; if I should give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it would profit me nothing."

And again St. Vincent de Paul declares, "It is a work most agreeable to Our Saviour to visit the sick and infirm, and to comfort them, as He Himself recommended this kind of mercy. But to perform it with greater zeal and merit, you must see Jesus Christ in the person of the sick, for Jesus Christ says

He will regard as done to Him what we do for the poor and infirm."

St. Magdalene of Pazzi showed an inexpressible charity toward all the sick and weak in her monastery. She served them as well as she possibly could, solely for the love of God, looking upon them sometimes as temples of the Holy Ghost, sometimes as sisters of the angels, sometimes as Jesus Christ Himself.

St. Louis, king of France, served the poor upon his knees, with head uncovered. He saw in them members of Jesus Christ, united in their sufferings with Him, and nailed with Him to the cross. St. John Berchmans found an inexpressible satisfaction in being with the sick. He had the gift of making them esteem and love their condition. It was his custom to read for them something pious, and to speak to them on subjects that might animate their devotion toward Mary, the Consoler of the afflicted.

"To have for our neighbor the love that Our Saviour commands," says St. Francis de Sales, "our hearts must be good, kind, complacent, even at a time when we feel toward him a repugnance on account of some natural or moral defect. To love thus is to love for God's sake. The maxim of the saints was, that in loving and doing good we must never consider the person to whom we do the service but Him for whom it is performed."

St. Jane Frances had a singular affection for those who by their faults had given her cause to suffer. "It is well that we have something to suffer," she said. "Our Saviour has given us a fundamental law that we bear with our neighbor; but if our neighbor has no fault, or if he does us no wrong, in what can we bear with him?"

"True love, which alone is meritorious and du-

rable," wrote St. Francis de Sales, "comes from a charity which makes us love our neighbor in God and for God; that is, because God wills that we love him, and because our neighbor is dear to God, or because God is in him. It is not wrong to love him for other honorable motives, because he has done us some good, or because we see beautiful qualities in him, if at the same time we love him more for God than for these human motives. Nevertheless, the less we love him for these natural qualities, the more our love is pure and perfect. This pure love does not prevent us from loving certain persons more than others, such as our relatives, our benefactors, or those who are virtuous, when this preference comes from their closer resemblance to God, or because God wills it. Oh, how rare is this kind of love!"

This saint always considered God in his neighbor, and his neighbor in God. Hence the respect and love he showed to all, the civility in all his actions. It might be said that his courtesy to all was an act of religion. He wrote as follows to the Superior of a convent: "Hold yourself well balanced with your daughters, that you may not distribute your affections or favors only according to their natural qualities. How many there are who are not to our taste but who are agreeable to God! Charity considers true virtue and the beauty of the soul, and diffuses itself over all without partiality."

"A Christian ought in a manner to have three hearts in one," are the words of St. Benedict Joseph Labre, "one for God, another for his neighbor, and the third for himself."

This great servant of God, of whom it may be said that the Holy Ghost was his teacher, points out in a most admirable manner these three objects of Christian charity—God, our neighbor, and our-

selves. "It is necessary that the first heart," said he, "be for God: pure and sincere, that it direct all its actions toward Him, that it breathe only with love for Him and with ardor in His service, that it embrace all the crosses it pleases God to send. The second heart must be for our neighbor: generous, fearing no labor, no suffering in his service; compassionate, praying for the conversion of sinners, for the souls in purgatory, and for those who are afflicted. The third heart, which is for himself, should be firm in its resolutions, abhorring all sin, giving the body to austerity and penance, and constantly cultivating a life of mortification and sacrifice." The saint practiced to the letter what he taught. Through this means he attained a perfect charity, after the example of Jesus Christ.

Prayer.

My God, let me have for Thee the heart of a child who tenderly loves his father. Give me for my neighbor the heart of the best of mothers. For myself, give me the heart of a judge who is most just.

CHAPTER XLII.

Faith and Humor.

Not long ago, in the course of a conversation, a person remarked to me: "But you Catholics are such gloomy persons!" I tried to refute the charge by smiling largely—*probatur ridendo*. But my companion subsumed: "O! I don't mean universally and in every individual case. But your religion—you know—your attitude, your temper, is severe and forbidding and all that."

This saying seems typical. The days have gone by when Protestants believed that Catholic priests had horns and cloven feet; but the days will hardly come when Protestants will give up their notion that Catholicism and gloom are synonymous, and that the outward badge of our religion is an abiding frown. Stripping the idea of all that is exaggerated in it, it does us honor, perhaps more honor than Catholics individually can in conscience accept; being a testimony to the serious and wise character of our lives. For obviously life is no jest to a man who believes in its purpose and its eternal duration; who reads its value in the blood of Christ, as our Catholic faith teaches us to do. Indeed there is none of us but can wish sincerely that we merited a little better the title to somberness in the sense of Catholic seriousness and determination.

But what we are charged with is not, of course, this right sincerity and purposefulness, but an excess of seriousness, a depressing solemnity and heaviness—in a word, a lack of humor. Moreover, the charge is distinctively put against us, not as men,

but as Catholics. We are said to be gloomy by a necessity flowing from our worship, from our belief. It would further seem that not Protestants only, but even Catholics themselves occasionally entertain this notion of the harshness and narrowness and cheerless rigorism of our faith. It may not be easy to show such as these that in truth our religion is in reality instinct with the subtlest, deepest, richest humor possible to men. Indeed so essential is great humor to Catholic faith that the practical presence or absence of this humor is not a bad test of a man's vigor or weakness in faith.

Humor is the just appreciation of the incongruous things of life. That is a part definition, at least; for humor is an elusive quality, existing in the concrete, dealing with the concrete, surrounding living things and entering into them, as the oxygen of the air enters into and vivifies our blood. Men feel its presence and recognize it and honor it and delight in it; but can no more analyze it than one can analyze life, which departs at the touch of the dissecting instrument. One takes up *Henry IV.*, or *Alice in Wonderland*, or *The Frogs*, or *Three Men in a Boat*, or *Hudibras*, or *Mr. Dooley's Philosophy*—and grows mellow with them, and wise, and says: "What humor may be in the categories, I know not; but they who wrote these things are humorists, children of comprehension and of wisdom." They compel us, not to laugh, but to smile. They widen our horizon and draw out our sympathies. In gentleness and with great pity and love, we look from end to end of the earth and are filled with kindly merriment at the misfits we see.

But we know this, that humor is built on truth and knowledge. A man who knows only a fraction of himself and others can not have that plenitude

of humor of one who knows the whole. The humor that is bounded by this world is feeble beside that humor which draws from earth and heaven, from time and eternity. As the field of humor broadens, so itself becomes larger, kindlier, more powerful, more soothing. That conceited fellow strutting before me, preening himself ridiculously—if he is a unit to me, a solitary specimen, I can not smile at him with half the genial relish that comes from contemplating him as one of a multitude of his kind, a concretion of a folly that I know to be general, that I know to exist in myself also. This vexation, which I make light of because I know that to-morrow I shall not be troubled by it, can make me merry if I put it with its million tiny fellows in the souls of all men and set the puny heap of littlenesses against the background of eternity.

So, also, humor grows in richness and subtle influence as its source in a man is less fitful, more steadfast and abiding. What is the momentary flash of pleasantry, in comparison to that strong persistent flood of humor that has become one with a man, that ebbs and flows like the sea, but like the sea never diminishes, never departs! In truth, those men only have real humor at all, whose humor is a part of their lives, pulsing in their every thought and action, flowing out of their deepest, most enduring principles. For when we have gone into the consideration of humor as far as we dare do without losing our concept of it, we come to a very wonderful thought. Hilaire Belloc puts it thus: "For I know that we laughers have a gross cousinship with the Most High, and it is this contrast and perpetual quarrel which feeds a spring of merriment in the soul of a sane man."

Can one wonder then at our coupling "humor and

faith"? For faith is the solution and interpretation of life, the bestower of knowledge and of wisdom more than knowledge. Faith widens our limited days here into endless days, and lays bare men's souls and the secrets of God, and gives us that mastery of life which is needed to laugh at life, and shows us the relation of all things and their harmony, and what preserves that harmony and is admirable, and what jars with that harmony and is laughable. Knowledge and power, wisdom and love, these are at the roots of all right humor and ring in every laugh that befits the soul of a man.

"Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem"—can bring smiles where tears were, and light where darkness was, and courage and saneness of view where all was gloomy and distorted by sadness. "The fashion of this world passeth away"—and we alone who know this are the truly light-hearted of the world. "You shall take none of these things with you," says St. Paul; and I have seen a man smile through his tears beside the grave of his son, because he knew that afterward he himself would leave in another grave the heartache begun at this one.

No, our faith does not lack humor. It abounds in humor, it *is* humor; the tenderest, most cheery, most lasting humor; so tender, so great, so subtle, that only those who have it can know it for such. In common occurrence, the drollest remarks are lost on men who have no drollery in them: so is the humor of faith an unknown thing to all who do not possess it.

St. Lawrence, directing the roasting of his own body with the nicety of a cook; our Irish peasant who says, "Thanks be to God, my rheumatism is much worse to-day;" our nuns who can be merry in

the abode of death;—these are some instances of the humor of faith. In its fulness, perhaps only the saints have it—those serene, large beings, beneath whose awe-inspiring calmness runs an unbroken ripple of laughter at the follies and pettinesses that surround them; whom no adversity disheartens and no sufferings sour; whose eyes are bright with eternal merriment looking on the fashion of this world which passeth away.

I have before me, while writing, the picture of a young man clad in cassock and surplice; a man of lean ascetic face; who holds in his hand a crucifix, and stands by a table on which rest a discarded coronet and a penitential scourge. Beneath the picture are the words, *"Quid hoc ad æternitatem?"* The picture is familiar to all of us, and represents that great saint and universal patron of Catholic youth, Aloysius Gonzaga. The legend under it is a pet saying of Aloysius, a pertinent question applied by him to the thousand and one minutiæ of daily life—"How does this look in the light of eternity?" We can imagine this boy-saint, as he passed through the streets of Rome on his way to or from school, or to some hospital or church. An unbeliever would be chilled at his constraint and austerity. "Another example of monkish, Catholic gloom—a zealot, a fanatic; a man bereft of all sanity or humaneness, looking at life in warped, crabbed manner!" Yet the unbeliever would be the fanatic, the narrow-minded man; and Aloysius the humorist. For if the gorge of our spectator-friend rose; if he gave expression to his scorn in words; if even he spat upon this Jesuit bigot, Aloysius would have said to himself, *"Quid hoc ad æternitatem?"* and would have gone on his way with a smile, making merry in his heart.

Fancy a man who all day long, in every varying circumstance, was asking himself, *"Quid hoc ad æternitatem?"* What an infinity of laughable things he would see! What a wide, kindly, smiling view of life he would acquire! Think of the countless occurrences that fret and annoy, that drive a man into himself and shut up his outlook over the world which the good God has given him, that make him petty and irritable and sour—how they would go down before such a question, as rank weeds before a scythe; how they would be lost sight of, as a swarm of gnats becomes invisible under the full light of an unclouded noon!

Whatever be the definition of humor—and it matters exactly nothing what it be—the essence of it is saneness, balance, breadth; and complete saneness, undisturbed balance, infinite breadth, are the gifts of faith and of faith only. Knowledge stops at the edge of the earth. Faith goes on beyond the stars, illimitable, calm, all-comprehending. The wisdom of the world is a surface wisdom and breeds only a surface humor. The wisdom of faith reaches from heaven to hell, into the heart of all living; and when it smiles the angels of God smile with it. The humor of men may be on the lips and in the mind only. The humor of faith must come from the heart, from the "understanding heart."

St. Paul bids us "rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice." For ours is the heritage of joy; since it is given us to know what God knows, and to love all that He loves, to feel the presence of His angels round about us, to consider life in its completeness, and to look forward unavertedly, beholding the brightness of eternal peace and the sea which is about the throne of God, where the world looks out upon only chaos and the night. Our faith

has a higher purpose than merely to make us wise and patient and kindly. The humor of life is not its object but it is its true and certain concomitant; growing as it grows, waning as it wanes. If it can with truth be said of us that we lack humor, we must blame the lack of it not upon our religion, our faith, but upon our unfaith and our irreligion.*

*William T. Kane, S.J., in *The American Ecclesiastical Review.*

The Blessed Virgin receives Holy Communion at the hands of St. John.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Cheerfulness.

St. Paul admonishes us: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice!" (Phil. iv. 4.) And the Prophet Habacuc sings: "I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will joy in God my Jesus. The Lord God is my strength and He will make my feet like the feet of harts; and He, the Conqueror, will lead me upon my high places singing psalms" (Habac. iii. 18, 19). There is an apostolate of *cheerfulness* as well as of prayer and of preaching by word and example. Like a sweet, fragrant flower by the roadside, whose bright loveliness is a joy to every one who passes by, our cheerfulness is a blessing to all with whom we come in contact. A Religious, merely by being cheerful, exerts a quiet yet potent influence for good. Let us bear this in mind that we can be helpful to souls, that we can encourage them and strengthen them in good by our cheerfulness and amiability. The author of *The Art of Being Happy* tells us: "It is well to do our duty, but sometimes this is not enough for the happiness of others and our own. We must do our duty with joy, with eagerness, with love. We must not keep count of what we do, nor stop strictly and sternly at the exact limit of duty. Let us learn to devote ourselves generously, above all when there is question of fulfilling certain obligations of our state, position, etc., by which we do good to our brethren. Let us learn to show always a smiling face, although our work is distasteful to us or overwhelms us. And after

having worked hard let us take care not to recall in conversation the pains we have taken, the fatigue that we have imposed upon ourselves. Then our duty accomplished will please every one: God first, then men, and last of all our own poor heart."

Our Lord Himself has said: "Be of good cheer!" And He said this substantially many times. Jesus was indeed a Man of sorrows, but He was not a sad man. His face must always have reflected the serenity of His soul. He was meek and humble, gentle and amiable. "He went about doing good to all."

From the Gospel narrative we can glean that Jesus possessed a cheerful temper, serenity mingled with tender seriousness, a most engaging presence, and a winning personality. Children came to Him willingly and loved to linger near Him, and how can any one imagine Him embracing and caressing little children without a smile of loving kindness? Men followed Him in crowds, fascinated by His charm of manner and of speech. And into woman's heart came the thought: What happiness to be the mother of such a son!

Among the saints—the close followers of Christ—St. Francis de Sales pre-eminently commands our admiration and our love for his Christlike characteristics of cheerful serenity, meekness, humility, patience, charity, kindness, sweetness of temper and suavity of deportment. Like Our Saviour, the gentle Bishop of Geneva loved to make use of comparisons drawn from nature to illustrate his sermons, which are so replete with good cheer and helpfulness.

As we read in the introduction to *The Mystical Flora of St. Francis de Sales:* "In this he holds a place peculiarly his own. His images do not recall

scenes of Cappadocian gloom, like those of St. Basil, nor, like St. Jerome's, the harshness of the desert. But rather, as the clear blue waters of the lakes of his own Savoy soften without distorting the rugged outlines of the overhanging hills, which they reflect bright with sunshine, gay with flowers, and crowned with teeming vines, so does his gentle spirit present to our minds the loftiest doctrines in all the grandeur of truth, and yet clothed in images of beauty, that charm the fancy while they flash new light upon the understanding. But most of all is this true of him as he comes in from the garden with comparisons gathered from the flowers that bloom therein." The spiritual comparisons of St. Francis drawn from plants and flowers make clear to us "how one may draw good thoughts and holy aspirations from everything that presents itself in all the variety of this mortal life" (*Devout Life,* Part II., Ch. XIII.).

Ornsby, in his Life of the saint, says: "There appears in the mind of St. Francis de Sales that union of sweetness and strength, of manly power and feminine delicacy, of profound knowledge and practical dexterity, which constitutes a character formed at once to win and subdue minds of almost every type and age. As the rose among flowers, so is he among saints. From the thorny, woody fiber of the brier comes forth that blossom which unites all that can make a flower lovely and attractive; and from the hot and vehement nature of the young Savoyard came a spiritual bloom, whose beauty and fragrance were perfect in an extraordinary degree. All things that command respect and attract love were found in St. Francis."

And this explains his power as a spiritual guide, his mighty influence over sinners, his success as a

peacemaker, and his helpfulness to all with whom he came in contact.

As followers of Christ, and in imitation of the saints, let us cultivate the habit of cheerfulness and pray for the spirit of gladness, which is rooted in charity, in the peace of a good conscience, in gratitude to God for His blessings, in Christian hope and confidence, in perfect submission to the divine will; and let us do this not only for our own good but also for the happiness and betterment of others.

> "Every life is meant
> To help all lives; each man should live
> For all men's betterment."*

"Servus servorum Dei," "Servant of the servants of God," is one of the titles of the Pope. The Prince of Wales has borne for his motto *"I serve,"* since the fourteenth century. In a way we are all one another's servants. St. Thomas Aquinas says: "That wherein one man excels another man is given him of God that therewith he may serve other men." Our blessed Saviour tells us of Himself: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. xx. 28). At the Last Supper He washed His apostles' feet, saying to them: "I have given you an example." His example and His teaching are that the highest must not disdain the lowest, and that all are to serve all. Now we can all serve or help others by our cheerfulness and amiability. A cheerful person creates a wholesome moral atmosphere around him, and exerts an invigorating influence upon his environment.

There is great merit also in cheerfulness, when it is cultivated from a supernatural motive, when it is the fruit of divine and fraternal charity. It requires

*Alice Cary.

self-control and self-denial to maintain cheerfulness under all circumstances—in sickness, in pain, in sorrow, in poverty, in misunderstanding, and in unpleasant surroundings. Christian cheerfulness implies something more than natural temperament; it means self-denial—self-control. Natural disposition should not be offered as an excuse for being morose and rude. By the grace of God and with an earnest effort we can overcome our evil nature. You find yourself refreshed by the presence of cheerful persons; why not make earnest efforts to be helpful to others by your own cheerfulness and amiability? Strew the road with flowers for others, and in turn your own pathway will be scattered with roses.

In *Ye Are Christ's,* we read of a virtue which Aristotle called by the pretty Greek name of *Eutrapelia.* Father Rickaby, S.J., writes in the above-mentioned book: "*Eutrapelia* may be defined 'playfulness in good taste.' Aristotle himself defines it: 'a chastened love of putting out one's strength upon others.' There is in every ordinary boy a disposition to romp, to play the fool, and to destroy property; a disposition which ought to be sternly repressed; subdued, and kept under by those responsible for the boy's education, beginning with himself. Otherwise the boy can have no place in civilized society: he will turn out a young savage. But though repressed, the disposition should not be killed within him and extirpated altogether. It is a defect of character to have no playfulness, no drollery, no love of witnessing or even creating a ridiculous situation. *Eutrapelia* knows exactly when and how to be funny, and where and when to stop. 'All things have their season,' says Ecclesiastes (iii. 1, 4), 'a time to weep, and a time to laugh: a time to mourn, and a time to dance.' A proud and quarrel-

some man is never a funny man; and it may be doubted if ever an heresiarch enjoyed a joke. Did Calvin, for instance, after he was turned seventeen, ever laugh except in derision of others, that bitter, insolent laughter which Holy Scripture 'counts error,' and calls 'the laughter of a fool' (Eccles. ii. 2; vii. 4-7)? Many a difficulty, many an incipient quarrel, many a dark temptation is dissipated the moment one catches sight of some humorous side to the matter."

Life is a serious thing, and on that very account we require some play to set it off. That is why we find excellent men, saintly men, sometimes talking nonsense and playing the fool. Sir Thomas More could at times be very playful. Goethe refers to the eccentricities of St. Philip Neri as "his whimsical sallies." "These sallies," as we read in the *Psychology of the Saints,* "were often full of good sense, as, for instance, when the Pope sent him to visit a monastery in the neighborhood of Rome in order to examine into the sanctity of a Religious said to be favored with revelations and ecstasies. The weather was abominable, and Philip, who had started on a mule, arrived at the convent soaked to the skin and covered with mud. The Sister was brought to him, and she appeared full of sweetness and unction. By way of beginning his theological examination, Philip sat down, held out his leg, and said to her: 'Pull off my boots.' The Sister drew herself up, scandalized. Philip had seen enough. He seized his hat and went back to the Vatican, to tell the Holy Father that a Religious so devoid of humility could not possibly possess the graces and virtues with which she was credited. It seems that in our own times a similar test has been held sufficient. A certain Rose Tamisier was supposed to be favored with extraor-

dinary graces. A prudent ecclesiastic came to see her. 'You are the saint, aren't you?' he said to her. 'Yes, Father,' was the answer. The illusion was instantly detected."

"Eutrapelia," as Father Rickaby says, "is a blend of playfulness and earnestness. Without earnestness playfulness degenerates into frivolity. 'O Lord, give me not over to an irreverent and frivolous mind' (Ecclus. xxiii. 6)."

In the earliest days of the Society of Jesus, there was a novice much given to laughing. One day he met Father Ignatius, and thought that he was in for a scolding. But St. Ignatius said to him: "Child, I want you to laugh and be joyful in the Lord. A Religious has no cause for sadness, but many reasons for rejoicing; and that you may always be glad and joyful, be humble always and always obedient."

A gentle writer urging us to encourage others with cheerful kindness says: "You would not leave those plants in your window without water, or refuse to open the shutters that the sunlight might fall upon them, but you leave some human flower to suffer for want of appreciation or the sunlight of encouragement. Utter the kind word when you can. Give the helping praise when you see that it is deserved. The thought that 'no one knows and no one cares' blights many a bud of promise."

It is evident that the Religious who is always cheerful, always rejoicing in the Lord in the exacting routine of her daily occupations, is a blessing to her community. She will do her own work well and lighten the burdens of others. She will attract souls and draw them with her along the way of perfection. Montaigne says: "The most manifest sign of wisdom is contented cheerfulness, and it is

undoubtedly true that a cheerful man has a creative power which a pessimist never possesses."

> "A merry heart goes all the day;
> A sad tires in a mile."

Lew Wallace tells us: "A man's task is always light if his heart is light," and there is wisdom in the Spanish proverb: "Who sings in grief procures relief."

The presence of a good and cheerful Religious acts like an invigorating tonic upon all around her. Nothing disturbs the equanimity of her spirit, which springs from the peace of God in her heart. The author of *The Imitation* says: "The joy of the just is from God and in God, and their rejoicing is in the truth. If there be joy in the world, truly the man of pure heart possesses it. Rejoice when thou hast done well."

The path of the Religious is indeed "the King's highway of the holy cross," the rugged path of penance and mortification; but love makes all things easy, and by the cross the spouse of Christ becomes like to her divine Lover. In the cross is our life, our salvation, our resurrection, and by the cross we attain to peace on earth and to eternal happiness.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," but the practice of mortification should not, and indeed as a rule does not, make the Religious sad or depressed. Joy is a gift of the Holy Ghost, one of His precious fruits, and characterizes the true, faithful spouse of Christ.

Father Dignam, S.J., says in his *Retreats:* "All discouragement comes from pride. Failure has nothing to do with pleasing God. A soul who fails and makes her act of contrition twenty times in the day will probably have given God more glory, and

done more for Him, than one who has gone quietly on all day without failure; God created some people (it may be said) to serve Him by failure; for they give Him glory by their acts of contrition and humiliation, while if they had succeeded, their pride would have made them displeasing to Him.

"A great want in our lives is the spirit of gratitude. I reverently believe most firmly the words of St. Augustine: 'Gratitude is the substance of religious life.' God is so good; everything that happens, everything which He either sends or permits, is for our good, and a true subject of gratitude; if we do not see it now, we shall when we come to die.

"Whenever a thought of sadness occurs to you, ask yourself what is self-love doing here? What is the love of the interests of the Sacred Heart doing? Then the sadness will not find the sympathy it has hitherto found. All sorrow for graces abused which comes from God, from true contrition, is peaceful and happy; it only wonders at God's goodness to it, after treating Him so badly. Sorrow from wounded self-love says: 'I might have been so different if I had not abused those graces, I might have been so high in the spiritual life, instead of being only just at the very bottom of the ladder.' It is all *self*, little or no thought of *God's* honor, of *God's* glory. For the future, then, true gratitude; and, in consequence, true peace. Suffer Our Lord to fulfil His words: 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.'"

Furthermore, the thought of heaven, and of that blessed time when we shall see God in the fulness of His beauty, ought to keep our hearts overflowing with peace and joy. We can be always bright and cheerful if we keep our eyes directed toward the eternal shores, to the blessed land of the saints, where the sky is ever cloudless, where the sun

of happiness never sets, where a perfect torrent of delight inundates the soul, where, as the beloved disciple tells us, "God shall wipe away all tears, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away."

Apropos of this subject, Father Henry Calmer, S.J., of blessed memory, who for many years filled the pulpit of St. Xavier Church, Cincinnati, and held vast audiences spellbound by his eloquence, wrote the following hitherto unpublished lines while visiting a Trappist monastery:

ETERNITY.

The silent monks prayed in their oaken stalls;
In the tangled grass by the abbey walls
Bloomed the roses red with their dropping leaves,
And roses pink as the dreams youth weaves,
And roses white as when love deceives;
How they bloomed and swayed in the garden there,
While the bell tolled out in the warm still air:
"Eternity!"

"Eternity!" the great bell rang.
"Leave life and love and youth," it sang;
And the red rose scattered its petals wide,
And the pink rose dreamed in the sun, and sighed,
And the white rose pined on its stem and died.
O Life, Love, Youth! Ye are sweet, ye are strong,
But barren lives shall bloom in a long
Eternity!

Where peace and interior joy abound there also cheerfulness of mien and manner ought to be found. And if peace and happiness are not found in the convent, where on earth shall we look for these blessings? Happiness presupposes peace, a threefold peace: Peace with God, peace with ourselves, and peace with our neighbor. That man is happy who lives in peace.

In the Holy Night, when Our Saviour was born, the angels sang: *"On earth, peace."* On the eve of His Passion, Our Lord said to His disciples in His touching farewell address: *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you."* And after the Resurrection, He greeted His followers repeatedly with the words: *"Peace be to you."* Peace must be a great blessing, a priceless treasure; it is indeed happiness.

The Church prays for peace daily in the Canon of the Mass. *"Dona nobis pacem!"* is the third petition of the *"Agnus Dei,"* "Give us peace!" And in the beautiful prayers before communion the Church again asks for peace. *"Pax huic domui!"* "Peace be to this house!" the priest says on entering a sick-room to administer the Last Sacraments. *"Pax!"* is the simple device of the illustrious Order of St. Benedict, in connection with the watchword: *"Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus!"* "That in all things God may be glorified!" This is substantially the same as the chant of the angels: *"Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus!"* "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will!" To seek God's glory means peace and happiness to man. His glory and our happiness are inseparably united. This is man's destiny, as the little Catechism teaches: "To know God, to love Him, to serve Him and to be happy with Him forever." This is true philosophy: Man tends naturally to happiness as to his last end, "a state of freedom from all evil and enjoyment of every good that can be desired, joined with the certainty of its everlasting duration."

In this world real happiness consists in the peace and joys of a good conscience and in the hope of an eternal reward which springs from a well-spent life.

"In the next world," as Archbishop Meurin says in his *Ethics,* "happiness consists in the fullest knowledge of the infinite truth, which is God Himself, in the most ardent love of the supreme goodness and beauty, which again is nothing else but God, and in the perpetual possession of supreme bliss, which consists in everlasting friendship and union with God."

The will of God, then, is this, that in the present life, in whatever circumstances divine Providence may place us, we live virtuously, avoiding evil, and doing good.

Peace with God implies the state of grace, a good conscience, submission to and fulfilment of the divine will. Peace with self implies the mastery over one's passions, the consciousness of duty well done, the approval of one's conscience. Peace with one's neighbor implies the commandment of love, the observance of the golden rule: "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner" (Luke vi. 31). This threefold peace is the basis of happiness. This happiness can not fail to be the portion of a true Religious, and the fruit of this happiness ought to be cheerfulness. A cheerful Religious is a rebuke to the world, whose votaries make it a matter of reproach against religion that it sends men to learn the solemn lessons of the grave and casts a blight upon life, that meditation on the eternal truths tends to stifle endeavor, to paralyze our energies, and to sadden our days. Religion really tends to gladden our hearts and to make our days calm and tranquil, as we have already pointed out.

"Rejoice in the Lord always!" applies especially to Religious. They ought always to be cheerful, and their joy should find expression in deeds of kindness

and helpfulness to all with whom they come in contact. They ought to heed the words of Our Lord to His followers: "Be of good cheer!" Life to-day is so strenuous that there is constant need of relief from its strain, and a sunny, cheerful, gracious soul is like a sea-breeze in sultry August or like a "draught of cool refreshment drained by fevered lips."

The author of *The Floral Apostles,* referring to the crocus and the primrose as the emblems of cheerfulness, says: "Cheerfulness furnishes the best soil for the growth of goodness and virtue. It is also the best of moral and mental tonics. 'A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance, but by grief of mind the spirit is cast down' (Prov. xv. 13). 'A joyful mind maketh age flourishing; a sorrowful spirit drieth up the bones' (Prov. xvii. 22)."

We can all acquire greater cheerfulness by assuming the right mental attitude toward our environment and circumstances, by looking habitually at the bright side of things, by training ourselves persistently to see the good and pleasant things in our common, daily life.

Some persons seem to have eyes only for the disagreeable things that happen to come into their life; they forget or overlook their blessings, and brood over their trials and misfortunes.

The soothing line in *The Rainy Day:* "Behind the clouds is the sun still shining," does not comfort them. Stevenson says:

> "Two men looked out through their prison bars;
> The one saw mud and the other stars."

Let us learn to look at life not to find misery and discomfort in it, but to find goodness, gladness, and beauty. The author of *The Art of Being Happy*

relates the following anecdote: "A poet was gazing one day at a beautiful rose-tree. 'What a pity,' said he, 'that these roses have thorns!' A man who was passing by remarked: 'Let us rather thank our good God for having allowed these thorns to have roses.' Ah! how we also ought to thank God for the many joys and blessings that He grants us in spite of our sins, instead of complaining about the slight troubles that He sends us."

"A doctor who has made a specialty of nervous diseases," so we read, "has found a new remedy for the blues. His prescription amounts to this: 'Keep the corners of your mouth turned up; then you can't feel blue.' The simple direction is: 'Smile; keep on smiling; don't stop smiling.' It sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? Well, just try turning up the corners of your mouth, regardless of your mood, and see how it makes you feel; then draw the corners of your mouth down, and note the effect, and you will be willing to declare 'there's something in it!'" A good suggestion in regard to any past trouble or humiliation is this: "Let it go!" "Forget it!" An optimist writes: "If you had an unfortunate experience this last year, forget it. If you have made a failure in your speech, your song, your book, or your article; if you have been placed in an embarrassing position, if you have been deceived and hurt by one whom you looked upon as a friend, if you have been slandered and abused, do not dwell upon it, do not brood over it; forget it! There is not a single redeeming feature in these memories. Do not make yourself unhappy by keeping on the walls of your heart the pictures of vanished joys and faded hopes. Forget them. Count your blessings. Be of good cheer."

As regards those faults of our neighbors that ir-

ritate us, it will help us to be more cheerful and amiable if we remember our own shortcomings, which they have to endure. St. Paul admonishes us: "Bear ye one another's burdens and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. vi. 2). Do not look for mistakes or faults to censure in others; let us rather look for an excuse for our brethren; let us admire their virtues and imitate them. The following lines can not be pronounced elegant, but they contain much wisdom:

> "There is so much good in the worst of us,
> And so much bad in the best of us,
> That it ill behooves any of us
> To rail at the faults of the rest of us."

The author of *The Art of Being Happy* says: "There is a word which can not be said too often to every Christian whom God has destined to live, converse and labor in the society of his fellow-creatures: *Be indulgent.* Yes, be indulgent; it is necessary for others, and it is necessary for your own sake. Forget the little troubles that others may cause you; keep up no resentment for the inconsiderate or unfavorable words that may have been said about you; excuse the mistakes and awkward blunders of which you are the victim; always make out good intentions for those who have done you any wrong by imprudent acts or speeches; in a word, smile at everything, show a pleasant face on all occasions; maintain an inexhaustible fund of goodness, patience, and gentleness. Thus you will be at peace with all your brethren; your love for them will suffer no alteration, and their love for you will increase day by day. But, above all, you will practice in an excellent manner Christian charity, which is impossible without this toleration and indulgence at every instant."

In conclusion, then, let us resolve to be cheerful and amiable at all times and under all circumstances. By keeping this resolution we shall glorify God, gain much merit ourselves, and be a blessing to others. Cheerfulness makes the daily burden of duty light and renders one strong for every struggle. It will be a blessing to ourselves and to all with whom we come in contact.

A cheerful Religious, in particular, by her buoyancy, geniality, and amiability, will attract souls to herself and draw them easily under her influence with a view to their sanctification and salvation. Her influence on others will be like summer warmth on field and forest, stirring up and calling forth the best that is in them, and urging them on to walk more swiftly, more bravely, more joyously in the way of perfection. And thus she will serve and please her Lord and Master, the divine Lover of souls.

CHAPTER XLIV.

The Apostleship of Kindness.

THERE is a missioner sent from heaven whose gentle influence is of great importance in the exercise of our apostleship. Its name is kindness.

We do not believe there is a heart on earth, however hardened in worldliness or long habits of sin, that is altogether callous to the influence of this heaven-sent missioner.

We may judge of the beneficial effects of kindness by the contrary results of its antithesis, unkindness, which, resembling a withering frost or a biting blast sweeping over the fair things of earth, scatters destruction as it passes.

How many a noble work has been nipped in the bud by the blast of an unkind judgment; how many a generous heart has been crushed in its brightest hopes by a jealous criticism; how many a holy inspiration, destined to bear abundant fruit for God and souls, has been forced back into the poor heart from whence it had ascended, there to be stifled utterly and forever, leaving that heart, as the poet so graphically represents it, "like a deserted bird's nest filled with snow," because unkindness had robbed it of that for which, perhaps, alone it cared to live. How much, then, we may believe has been lost to the world of all that is good and great and beautiful through the instrumentality of unkindness; and if it be thus, what developments, on the other hand, may we not expect, in the order of grace as well as of nature, in the hearts and minds of men beneath the genial sun of kindness?

Even in the common things of life, and in the natural order, how striking are the results of the passage of this heaven-sent missioner, this angel of light and consolation.

The same sorrow, which perhaps has weighed on us for years, may be lying on our hearts; we may be in the same set of embarrassing circumstances; no change may have taken place in our material position, in our actual trials, but a word, a little word has been addressed to us, and it has fallen on our weary and desolate hearts like a voice from the true home of our souls, or like the harp of David soothing Saul's troubled spirit. It has been like a ray of sunshine, penetrating the dark shadow hanging over us, and calling forth once more the flowers in our hearts that were drooping there for want of it. That word of kindness has wrought a work—silently, unobtrusively—a work whose blessed fruit, perhaps, will endure throughout eternity.

Let us then be kind if we would promote the interests of that Heart of which kindness was the special characteristic. Let it not be in isolated acts—"few and far between;" this is not the kindness of Jesus' Heart, the missioner who is to do His work and advocate His interests in souls. No—it must be like prayer—a *habitual disposition* of heart, which is ready to manifest itself without any effort and almost unconsciously, at all seasons and in all circumstances, and thus it will be with hearts which are united to that Heart of love. Kindness will flow from them, as it were, naturally, just as the flowers give forth their perfume, the birds their song, and as the sun shines down alike on good and bad, as it goes on its daily circuit—because all this is of their very nature. In the most trivial things of daily life the spirit of kindness should render itself evident. God

is kind in small things as well as in great ones. This is manifested in the works of creation, but it is brought much more home to us in the Incarnation of the Word, in which the loving kindness and considerateness of the Sacred Heart are shown forth so touchingly in all its dealings with men.

Kindness is as the bloom upon the fruit—it renders charity and religion attractive and beautiful. Without it even charitable works lose their power of winning souls, for without kindness the idea of love of anything supernatural—in a word, of Jesus, is not conveyed to the mind by the works performed, even though they be done from a right motive. There is such a thing as doing certain exterior actions, which are intended to be charitable, ungraciously. Now, actions thus performed do not manifest the kindness of the Heart of Jesus, nor will they be efficacious in extending the empire of His love or in winning souls to His kingdom. The fruit may be sound, but the bloom is not on it; hence it is uninviting. Therefore, advisedly have we said that kindness has a mission to perform on earth which no other agent can effect. It is a lever specially designed by God to loosen the hard clods of earth in the hearts of men, in order that the water beneath those clods might gush forth again and irrigate the land grown barren from its hardness; it is a genial sun lighting on the frozen snow of hearts, which no other influence could melt; it is as the rod of Moses, at whose touch the waters flowed forth from the arid rock of Horeb; for even so does kindness, with magic power, touch the barren rock of pride, opening up salutary wellsprings in the soul, and causing eyes which had not wept for long to shed tears of chastening sorrow.

Let us then be kind, since kindness is a missioner whose apostolate is designed for the obtainment of

such great things in the interests of the Heart of Jesus; and while we exercise this meek apostolate among those with whom we come into personal contact let us be kind in our thoughts of those whom we have never seen and probably never shall see here below. There are men whose lives are but a tissue of worldliness, whose souls seem incapable of any aspiration above the material things surrounding them, or the rationalism which they have adopted for their creed. Let us be gentle in our thoughts of them. There may be some among them on whose ears the voice of kindness has not fallen for years, on whose hearts its softening touch has not for many a long day rested, on whose souls its genial sun has ceased to shine—perhaps since the days, long past now, when a mother, now gone to her rest, smiled fondly on them. All chastening influences are from them, perhaps, withdrawn, and they stand alone in the world, surrounded only by associations wholly incapable of acting on their better nature. Possibly if they were but brought within the influence of the heaven-sent messenger we have been considering, those men whose lives are now a reproach to Christianity might be awakened to better things, and, finally, be opened to the higher influences of religion.

And, after all, if we reflect upon it, kindness is but the outcome and exemplar of the divine precept: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There is nothing we personally so much appreciate as kindness. We like others to think of us kindly, to speak to us kindly, and to render us kindly actions and in a kindly manner. Now, as has been said above, we should know how to put ourselves in the place of others, and thus we should testify to them that kindliness that we value so much ourselves.

When our divine Lord came down upon earth, He came not only to save us by shedding His blood for us, but to teach us by His example how to cooperate with Him in extending the kingdom of His Father. And one of the most powerful means which He employed for this purpose was kindness, gentleness, and forbearance. "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared," by which words we learn that kindness is not altogether synonymous with goodness, but, as it were, a luster, a bloom, an attraction superadded to it.

We might regard this sweet reflection from the Heart of Jesus from many points of view, but it is especially under one aspect that we have been considering it; namely, as a powerful weapon in our hands for the efficacious exercise of our apostolate. Kindly thoughts of others will be productive of prayer in their regard, at once fervent and affectionate—prayer such as the loving Heart of Jesus willingly listens to; kindly words and deeds will draw souls to the love of Him whose spirit they behold so attractively reproduced in His members. As the wood-violets give forth their perfume from beneath the brushwood that conceals them from view, telling us of their unseen nearness, so kindness reveals to us the nearness of Jesus, the sweetness of whose spirit is thus breathed forth.

Such is the kindness which is that great missioner sent by the Heart of Jesus to exercise an apostolate of love upon earth, and so to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls. To exercise this apostolate will be the endeavor of all true lovers of the Divine Heart, and thus they will reproduce and perpetuate the life of the Heart of Jesus upon earth, so that it may be said of them: "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour has appeared" in His members.—From the *Voice of the Sacred Heart.*

CHAPTER XLV.

Reflections on Happiness.

I. WHAT must we do to be happy? The thing is not hard. Much knowledge is not necessary for this, nor much talent, but only a real good will to do one's duty. Happiness, as far as it can exist here below, consists in peace, in the joy of a good conscience. Our conscience will be joyous and peaceful if it know not remorse; it will not know remorse if we are careful not to offend God. To fly from sin is, therefore, the chief source of happiness on earth. If our conscience is pure, our life will be happy. There are none happier than saints, for there are none more innocent.

II. "If I could do good around me," some one said, "I feel that I should be happy." Yes, to do good and to do it, not through ostentation or self-interest, but for the love of God, is an infallible secret for finding happiness. And it is so easy to do good around one. Here is some poor person whom you can help; an ignorant person whom you can instruct; some one in trouble whom you can cheer; an accident or a mistake that you can set right, a good advice that you can give, a service that you can render, and a thousand things of the sort which occur from morning till night. Remember those words of our divine Redeemer: "Whoever shall give to drink to one of those little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you he shall not lose his reward."

III. There is no surer or easier means of maintaining an interior spirit, union with God, purity of

conscience, and fervor—all of them things which contribute greatly to make the soul happy—no surer or easier means than to make it a rule to raise one's heart toward Jesus and Mary every half hour. A glance toward heaven, an aspiration, an act of love, is enough. In making this act, in casting this glance, we are forced to enter into ourselves; and if anything troubles our peace of heart, or exposes us to fail in our duty, we are immediately warned of it. Does not the sick man take, every half hour or even every quarter of an hour, the medicine prescribed for him by the physician? Well, our poor soul is sick, and it needs at a fixed interval some moments of recollection, some short prayer to strengthen it again and to sustain it. Oh, what progress we should make in the ways of holiness and true happiness if we would adopt this practice!

IV. How can disquiet, that mortal enemy of happiness, find a place in our souls if we reflect well on what God is with regard to us? God sees all that happens to us: this is an absolutely certain truth. God loves us, and desires only our good: another truth which is not less certain. Therefore if sickness, poverty, adversity fall upon me, ought I not to say: "I take refuge with a blind trustfulness in the bosom of my heavenly Father, for He sees my state and He loves me"? If envy and calumny pursue me, ought I not to say: "Nothing of all this can hurt me, for God hears the unjust words spoken against me and He loves me"? Thus in all the crosses which come to us, if we have absolute confidence in God, none of these will be able to make us lose our peace of heart.

V. It often happens that we bring troubles and annoyances upon ourselves, and fall into many faults, just through want of reflection. We decide some

matter too quickly; we utter too quickly a bitter word; we follow too quickly the counsel of passion and self-love; we open too quickly a certain book, and so forth. We ought to have asked ourselves first, is what I am going to do praiseworthy, useful, or even allowed? What will be the consequences of it? Shall I repent of having done it? A moment of recollection, and above all an interior glance toward our good God, would be enough many times to open our eyes and would prevent acts that we regret. Let us learn to master our natural eagerness, and let us observe this rule faithfully if we would spare ourselves many little miseries and sometimes even very great ones.

VI. Let us always keep before our minds that word of Our Lord: "With the same measure that you mete unto others it shall be meted unto you." How many salutary reflections this will suggest to us! Thus I can say to myself: if I am rude and hard toward my brethren, God will be harsh toward me; if I let nothing pass with them, He will let nothing pass with me; if I refuse to speak to them, He will not let His voice be heard in the depth of my heart, but will go away far from me; if I do not pardon the real or fancied wrongs that have been done me, no more will He pardon me. Oh, what a fate I am preparing for myself in behaving as I do in my daily intercourse with those around me! And if I find that my good God is not lavish of His graces toward me, and that He turns a deaf ear when I invoke Him, is it not because I am niggardly with others and let myself be entreated twenty times before doing them some little service? Come, my soul, let us begin to be wise and understand our own interests. Let us have a large, generous heart, full of goodness and thoughtfulness for others. All the good that we do

for them will be done indirectly for ourselves. In making them happy we shall make sure of our own happiness.

VII. How sweet and agreeable an occupation it is to give pleasure to those around us! It is quite natural among Christians, but it becomes almost a duty among the members of a family or a community, especially toward persons whom age or rank places above us. And, to give pleasure, what is necessary? Things the most insignificant, provided they be accompanied by amiable manners; what is necessary, above all, is to have habitually a smile on our lips. Oh! who can tell the power of a smile? For ourselves, it is the guardian of kindness, patience, tolerance, all the virtues that we have occasion to exercise in our relations with our neighbor. There is in fact no danger of our being rude or severe as long as a smile rests on our lips. For others, it is a source of contentment, joy, satisfaction, and encouragement. Without even uttering a single word we put those around us at their ease; we inspire them with a sweet confidence, if we approach them with a smile. Perhaps you will object that you can not smile, that you are naturally serious or even severe. Undeceive yourself: with real good will you will acquire this empire over yourself, you will soon do by custom what you at first did by constraint; and the interior joy that you taste will recompense you superabundantly for your trouble and your efforts.

"There are none so happy in this world as those who have tranquillity of soul in the midst of the troubles of life," says the venerable Curé d'Ars. "They taste the joy of the children of God. All pains are sweet when we suffer in union with Our Lord. To suffer—what matter?—it is only a moment. If

we could go and spend eight days in heaven, we should understand the worth of this moment of suffering. We should find no cross heavy enough, no trial sufficiently bitter."

VIII. A great secret for preserving peace of heart is to do nothing with over-eagerness, but to act always calmly, without trouble or disquiet. We are not asked to do much but to do well. At the Last Day God will not examine if we have performed a multitude of works, but if we have sanctified our souls in doing them. Now the means of sanctifying ourselves is to do everything for God and to do perfectly whatever we have to do. The works that have as their motive vanity or selfishness make us neither better nor happier, and we shall receive no reward for them.

IX. "I feel happy," said a holy person, "in proportion as I do my actions well." Let us meditate an instant on this luminous saying. To do well what one has to do—here again is the secret of being happy. Every man, then, can be happy; and, if we have not been happy hitherto, it is because we have not put this lesson into practice. But what is necessary for this? Oh, very little. To do every action, as we have already said, with a view of pleasing God; to do every action in the manner that God commands, either through Himself or through those who hold His place in our regard; to do every action as if we had nothing else to do but this, and as if we were to die after having done it.*

*Extracts from *The Art of Being Happy*, a brochure translated from the French by the Rev. Matthew Russell, S.J.

CHAPTER XLVI.

The Sweetness of the Heart of Jesus in His Manner of Teaching.

AMONG all the virtues that Our Lord held forth while upon earth, and of which He gave us at the same time the precept and example, there is one that He recommended most particularly to His disciples; namely, charity. Charity is the most universal virtue: it takes the place of all the others, supposes them and includes them all; it is the most efficacious of all virtues, it alone justifies one before God. One can have faith without being righteous, for the demons believe, and tremble; sinners have often clung to hope, yet for that were not reconciled to God.

Charity is the bond of hearts. A soul entirely belonging to God would be no longer dry and contracted by the inequalities of self-love; loving only for God, it would love like God with an admirable love, for God is love, as St. John has said. According to His divine promise His "bowels of compassion" were always an inexhaustible source of living water. Love should bear all, suffer all things, hope all for one's neighbor; love should surmount all difficulties; from the depths of the heart it should shed itself through all the senses; it should be moved to pity for the afflictions of others, and count its own as nothing; it should console, it should compassionate, it should accommodate itself to others, making itself little to the little ones, and becoming great with the great; it should weep with those who weep, and rejoice through condescension with those who re-

joice; it should be all to all, not with a forced appearance and dry demonstrations, but through the overflowing of the heart, in which charity should be a living source of all the tenderest and strongest sentiments.

What could be more touching than the sweetness and patience with which the divine Saviour instructed His disciples? He did not dissimulate but taught them all truth with a goodness quite astonishing to us. He taught them not to cling to Him except through supernatural motives, not to expect from His Heart any human advantage, and to count only upon the goods of heaven. What must not Jesus have suffered from those minds, so gross and so little acquainted with spiritual things! Nevertheless, He always treated them with sweetness and kindness, never becoming discouraged because He could not succeed in overcoming their prejudices. He knew that this moment would arrive, and He awaited it patiently. He did not spare Himself in their instruction, although they drew no profit from His lessons, and although He foresaw that they would be unproductive. He explained to them particularly the meaning of the parables that He used in speaking to the people; and if He sometimes reproached them for their want of understanding it was not to wound them nor to show them that He was shocked on account of it, but to cause them to elevate their minds and render them more attentive. His condescension in their regard was extreme; and it is inconceivable to us when we think of the master that He was, and with what disciples He had to deal. How greatly He was obliged to humble Himself to place Himself on their level! How many useless or indiscreet questions He was obliged to listen to on their part! What manage-

ment not to offend or discourage them! What perseverance to repeat ceaselessly the same things, which many times they understood no better the last time than the first!

Those charged with the instruction of others are so much the more exposed to anger and discouragement as they are themselves the more intelligent and their pupils the more dull of comprehension. We may, then, judge something of the ineffable indulgence of the Heart of Jesus, who, possessing all the treasures of divine science, was obliged to converse with men entirely material, and without understanding; yet nevertheless He never repulsed them, and never neglected any occasion of raising their minds to the things of God. He only considered Himself more obliged to communicate to them greater light and more abundant graces; He could easily have disabused them of their prejudices, enlightened their minds and have given them understanding of the Holy Scriptures, but the time had not yet come; He awaited submissively the will of His Father, and expressed no eagerness to see it sooner executed.

There is no virtue more necessary to those who teach others than sweetness. They are obliged to combat the defects of mind and character and the evil dispositions of those to whom they speak, and if they exhibit any degree of ill-humor, impatience, haughtiness, or imperiousness, it will be prejudicial to them and their instructions; it will alienate the minds of the pupils; it will be revolting to them and they will be disgusted. Let them recall the example of Jesus, how He proportioned His instructions to the capacity of each, how He enlightened them insensibly and by degrees, always seizing the most favorable moment, covering and smoothing over the difficulties that might cause those who lis-

tened to turn away. St. Peter has styled His conduct toward men *multiformis,* because it assumed a thousand forms in His manner of bestowing His graces; and as Wisdom informs us that each found in the manna the particular flavor that he relished, so Jesus varied His instructions according to their several necessities. The nourishment is proportioned to each soul according to its hunger and present necessity. Has He not told us that He knows us each by name? His direction then is different for soft and weak natures than for formed and firm characters; different for the perfect than for those who are not yet perfect: to each He gives what is best for him with tender and marvelous goodness.

"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and not alone in the words that it says, but yet more in the manner which accompanies them. A humble teacher may teach great things, but he teaches them with humility; there is nothing in his manner nor language that pride or self-sufficiency could resent; he understands how to bring himself to the level of those to whom he speaks, and to adapt himself to their limited intelligence. If he gives weight and authority to his words, it is not that he may be more esteemed himself, but for the honor of His name for whom he speaks, and to make deeper impression upon minds.

Such was our divine Master in His teaching; there was no affectation in His discourses, no appearance of eloquence, but a touching and charming simplicity. It would be impossible to express divine and sublime things in a more simple manner. His expressions, without being common, had nothing therein above the comprehension of the most mediocre minds; yet nevertheless they contained such profound meaning that the greatest geniuses com-

prehended them only imperfectly. He borrowed from the most ordinary objects the comparisons of which He made use, and His parables contained nothing that was not simple and familiar. It was a heart that spoke to heart, and which, full of what it said, caused the same to pass into the hearts of those who listened. Read His conversation with the Samaritan woman; see how He instructed, touched, and gained her little by little, and led her by degrees to recognize in Him the Messias. This was undoubtedly the work of His grace, but His words were His instrument and He adapted them to His secret actions.

How pleasant to us is the thought that Jesus has exercised, in our regard, and without exception, all the works of mercy! Let us beg this divine Master to teach us how to exercise some in regard to our neighbor, so that having walked in His footsteps in the practice of these virtues with which His heart was filled we may obtain from Him on that day of final consummation the special recompense contained in this sacred promise: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!"

Interior Christians, charged with the instruction and guidance of others, according to the example and lessons of the Heart of Jesus, speak with humility, because they speak not from themselves. They enlighten the mind, but they touch the heart more directly; they warm it, penetrate it, and fill it with a divine unction.

They are simple, easy, familiar; yet they combine a majesty with their simplicity that attracts and charms. Their persuasive power proceeds from the grace that inspires and directs them. Charity is patient, it is not troubled at the crosses of life and the defects of others; for charity consists in the

love of God, and the love of God acquiesces in the good pleasure of God, and sees the holy will of God in all things.

"Resist faithfully your impatience," says St. Francis de Sales, "by practicing with reason, and even against reason, a holy affability and sweetness toward all and above all toward those who cause you annoyance." "Watch over yourself that you become not troubled nor impatient on account of the defects of others," says St. Bernard.

Patience does not render one blind nor insensible; it perceives the imperfections of others and suffers accordingly; and if one would follow the dictates of nature he would exclaim against them. But in the presence of God he represses all these sallies of nature, and avoids any sign of impatience or bitterness upon any occasion when the heart is wounded or self-love offended; he measures his words, that they may give token of no contempt or offence, even toward those with whom he has reason to be displeased. He preserves on every occasion a civil, modest, and affable manner; he makes use of the greatest condescension in favor of those persons who, through their imperfection and weakness, are apt to inspire others with dislike or disgust. Can there be in the eyes of God a more beautiful sacrifice or a more perfect mortification than this?*

*From *The Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,* by Rev. F. Huguet.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The Perfection of the Religious Teacher.

PROFESSED Religious who are called to teach have their appointment "by divine grace." It is their privilege, and, if rightly taken hold of, it will be their constant joy to cooperate with God in His great work of accomplishing and perfecting the designs of creation. The renewal of the world, its conservation in a healthy spirit, means nothing else than a continuous creation through the action of the Divine Spirit. *"Emitte Spiritum Tuum et creabuntur, et renovabis faciem terræ."* This is eminently true of education, which is the training unto perfection of the highest type of creation—man.

But to cooperate rightly with God in this great work, the teacher requires special qualifications. These are, indeed, guaranteed to the members of the teaching orders—thanks to God's wondrous goodness—in the fact that He has called them to this task. Religious teachers may not always be conscious of the possession or operation of such qualities, because these were given them in the manner of a germ or seed, to be developed and cultivated in the soil of a good and faithful heart; and as it is often difficult to tell what sort of fruit a small seed may bring forth, so a teacher may have no clear conception of what he or she can do, or rather what God may do in using them as instruments of education. Nor is it necessary. Does the lily grow less fair because it is unconscious of its growth? In truth, it is very much better for all of us that we should not trouble ourselves about our talents in

the way of rating them. What we have to do is to use them, and their use begins by keeping them, like fruitful seed, under ground for a while (humility), and to gather in this condition a certain amount of heat (fervor) so that the seed may break (mortification); and then the little germ, whatever its ultimate productiveness, will of itself struggle through the hard crust of the earth to the light. And if after that it is kept under proper shelter, within the rays of the divine Sun which warms it, and drinks in the waters of divine grace which bedew it, and yields to the care of the gardener appointed by God to tie and to steady it, giving it a rule lest it grow crooked, and to prune it, sometimes even unto tears, lest it spread itself unduly—then that sprout of talent will bring flowers, and in its season fruits with which we may safely feed the little ones whom God intrusts to us for education.

Safely feed the little ones! We may; and yet in our very good-heartedness, which is sometimes a weakness, we may overfeed them or feed them at the wrong time, or feed them with a fruit too ripe or raw, or feed them in a manner too hasty, or in morsels too big for the little throats. In short, our feeding, however good the fruit of our gifts of mind, instead of preserving life, will produce illness, pain, mental dyspepsia, cholera, choking, death of mind and heart; and we who might have prevented it will be answerable for the results.

It is on this point, in the long line of a teacher's qualifications, that I intend chiefly to dwell in these pages, after briefly stating, for the sake of logical coherence, what every one knows to be the principal requisites, natural, intellectual, and moral, for all those who are called to the very important office of educating the young.

I. (1) Among what are termed natural or physical qualifications, health is obviously counted, inasmuch as it implies the possession of habits of life which exclude a warping of the judgment and temper of the teacher (*mens sana in corpore sano*), or the arousing of certain repugnances and prejudices which offend the sensibilities of the pupil. However, we know that defects of the body can often be compensated for by extraordinary gifts of soul. Among the most efficient educators have been those who were habitually under the stress of physical suffering.

(2) Next to health come (in the same natural order) an instinct of propriety, (3) a sense of order, (4) simplicity of manner. The last two are an ordinary result of the spirit of holy poverty and an abiding consciousness of the presence of God. I say of *holy* poverty, because that is quite compatible with the neatness and cleanliness which betoken a regard for our surroundings. "We are to form the pupils to habits of simplicity, order, economy, and a taste for the useful," writes the Venerable Madame Barat, one of the most enlightened educators of the nineteenth century, and of these things we must give the example. These are external qualifications.

There are likewise internal gifts of the natural order requisite for the successful work of education:

(1) Ordinary insight or penetration into human nature, and the tact which accompanies that gift; (2) the ability to communicate our thoughts; (3) sufficient inventive power (imagination) to present knowledge in an interesting form, and elicit attention; (4) the natural power of enforcing discipline; (5) pleasant manner.

Somehow sanctity supplies all these; but in pro-

portion as sanctity is lacking they must be supplied from the natural order.

II. In the intellectual order the teacher requires: (1) Knowledge of the branches or topics to be taught, and of methods, particularly in certain special branches. The present training colleges lay considerable stress on this, and teach, under the head of "theory and practice of education," psychology, logic, ethics, the art of teaching, the history of education, methods for special topics, school hygiene, school problems, criticism, elocution.* I mention these merely under the head of knowledge because of the popular demand, and because similar courses have been adopted by some of the teaching orders in England, notably in the Normal Training School of the Sisters of the Holy Child.

(2) The habit (natural or through training by mathematics, logic, etc.) of consecutive and logical thinking. This secures the method which develops by means of synthesis and analysis.

III. A third category of qualifications belongs to the moral order. For religious teachers they may be summed up in the faithful observance of the spirit and letter of the Rules of their institute.

This qualification is decidedly of the highest importance, since it supplies both knowledge and method, because—

(1) Nearness to God opens all the sources of wisdom and knowledge.†

*Cambridge Course, 1899.

†St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, St. Philip Benizi, Suarez, and other intellectual giants have called the crucifix their book; and we know what that book taught them even of human learning.

(2) Because nearness to God puts us in the right attitude toward the child; it gives us supernatural love, which inspires the best method for attracting and teaching it.

Such are in outline the qualifications which we must demand of the Christian educator, of whom the true Religious, apart from the well-informed parent, is the best type. If I were to set aside all didactic forms and put the whole matter in a simpler mold, omitting all that we possess in the principles of our faith, coupled with the practice of religious profession, and in the guidance and protection accorded us by the teaching institute of which we are members, I would say that our efforts should lay stress on the perfecting of two virtues, which will render our work of education not only eminently satisfactory from the religious point of view, but infinitely superior to any training that the best efforts of pedagogical science and art can attain in all the different orders of study, intellectual or social. The two virtues to which I refer are courage and justice. They are the two main hinges on which swings the gate of the religious educator's efficiency, the gate which opens the way for the pupil to that sphere of the child's future usefulness which the education in the schools over which Religious preside was intended to secure. If we desire confirmation of this thought we shall find it in the teaching of the Angel of the Schools, which presents a singular harmony with the educational maxims to be gleaned in general from the lives of the founders of the Orders that have made the training of the young their special object. Courage (fortitude), one of the essential requisites in the character of the Christian educator, is, according to the Angelic Doctor, a virtue which restrains man within the bounds of right reason,

while urging him to overcome the obstacles opposed to reason or to its legitimate use.*

There are two ways in which this virtue manifests itself:

(1) In sustaining with equanimity and good-will the hardships imposed upon us by our condition of life; (2) in facing deliberately new conditions involving hardships and dangers.

The habit of perseverance is the result and perfection of courage.†

It is this virtue of fortitude which strikes us so predominantly in the lives of those saintly and generous pioneers who came to the New World to teach the rudiments of Christian faith and civilization to the natives and to the neglected children of the early rude settlers. These noble Religious never spoke of success, yet it is to their seemingly slow progress that we owe the most valuable results of subsequent periods in our history of Christian education. The saintly Madame Duchesne used to say: "Personally I have never succeeded, but God gives me grace to rejoice in the success of others." Yet it was to her that Madame Barat felt impelled to write (February 16, 1852): "Oh, if we had many souls as zealous and as detached as those who have invaded your part of the world, *foundations would be easy.* Pray, then, dear and good Mother, urgently and fervently that our divine Master may consider the *needs of the souls* we ought to save. He will grant the prayers of my dear old daughter who has so well

Summa II. 2æ, qu. 123, art. 1.—*Cf. Le Prêtre Educateur,* Lecuyer, pp. 4 ff.

†*Cf.* 1 Cor. xiii. 7, where St. Paul shows the twofold manifestation of courage to be a characteristic of the fundamental virtue of charity—*"caritas omnia suffert"*—that is, bears in silence; and *"omnia sustinet"*—that is, sustains, supports.

understood the value of souls, and who *never stopped* at any obstacle when Jesus called upon her to help them."*

But this virtue of courage or fortitude, which we are to cultivate in ourselves as Christian educators, must likewise be drawn forth and developed in the child. I say *drawn forth and developed,* because its germ resides in the soul of the child. There is in every human being a physical and moral force which, though latent in early years, is capable of being cultivated so as to produce this Christian courage which is the secret of self-denial, of charity, of zeal, even unto martyrdom, for the salvation of souls. You will find this germ-virtue in the child's soul manifesting itself in three centers of action—intellect, heart, and will. In every child this moral force dominates in one or other of these faculties, and the secret of our gaining control of the child consists in finding the dominant faculty and developing and utilizing it.

The teacher must love the child and gain its affection in order to succeed in training it properly. But the difficulty is often how to draw out its affection; for we must not forget that love here spoken of is not a sentiment, not an attachment which is created by favors, caresses, or flattery. No; there are, it is true, children whom we thus bring to follow us by simply appealing to their affectionate disposition; but there are others in whom intelligence predominates over affection; and others in whom the will (self-will) predominates over both.

To the child that has heart, whose sympathies are strong and quickly rise to the surface, the educator need give comparatively little special attention.

*Life, Vol. II., p. 272.

Such a child will follow its teacher spontaneously, and it will do whatever is prescribed or even suggested by a superior who can command respect by his or her personal conduct as a Religious. Indeed, it is generally to the advantage of such a child if it be little noticed by the teacher, except in so far as the common discipline or exceptional sensitiveness, showing the need of occasional encouragement, may demand. What the child of heart needs most is the fostering of independence of character; and with this end in view it must become accustomed to stand alone; thus it is brought gradually to develop the element of courage latent in its soul. The young tree shaken by the rude winds and stripped of its leaves may look quite forlorn at times, and provoke the pity of the gardener; but the gardener, too, has an occasion here for the exercise of courage, by withholding the expression of sympathy, mindful only of the fact that the tree much shaken by the winds lays a stronger hold on the soil, provided the winds are not without intermission and do not come always from the same quarter. The natural craving for the esthetic, the poetic, and sentimental, which manifests itself in particular friendships, in letter-writing, and even in pious devotions, is to be curbed in all children of exceptionally big-hearted disposition, as a danger which saps that portion of the material of the soul from which character is to be built for their future safeguard through life. Even when it happens that, in the endeavor to repress this noxious tendency, we seem to wound the sensitiveness of the child, so that it droops in apparent helplessness, let us remember the nature of the southern *mimosa*. The little sensitive plant shrinks and collapses at the touch of the hand as though withered and broken forever; yet give it a little time and

sunshine and it rises up gradually, showing no traces of its former weakness. Hence it is that the wisest instructors, especially in the case of girls, warn the teacher against an excessive cultivation of sentiment among children at the expense of solid principles. However, while the proverb, *"Trop de sucre dans la jeunesse, mauvaises dents dans la vieillesse,"* applies here, as well as in the physical training of children, it ought to be remembered that while children of large sympathies are quite common in some, especially southern, countries, they are not so many in America; and they are becoming fewer day by day amid the materialistic tendency of modern life, which is calculated to dry up the sentimental element and to turn it into self-love of some other kind.

A second class of children referred to are those in whom the desire to know and the capacity to understand predominate over the qualities of the heart or the will. Such children must be reached through their minds. Although the teacher can fully control the child only by the attraction of the heart, yet it is necessary first to find and to open the way to the heart. In the predominantly intelligent child this is done by making it understand its deficiency. Seeing and reflecting to some extent upon its want, there arises in the young soul a longing for that which it lacks, to fill the void recognized in its nature. This longing awakens the operation of the heart, and gives the educator an opportunity to present an attraction by which the child can be led forward and drawn upward.

It would, therefore, be an error to appeal directly to the sentiment of affection in a child of this disposition before we have made it understand the quality of its weakness and the value of that which it lacks. This understanding on the part of the child is mostly

brought about by a judicious measure of humiliations in opposition to the things on which the child naturally prides itself. But such humiliations must not be imposed; they must be made to meet the child spontaneously, must come upon it gradually in the course of its tasks, and the ingenious teacher will readily find means to let the young talent try its strength upon problems just beyond its reach, looking quietly on, as if to say, After all, you are not so smart, my child, as one might expect. Thus the child is made to see in itself the cause of its humiliation, instead of inwardly resenting it as an act which the teacher inflicts upon it as a penalty for, or a safeguard against, pride.

But here, too, nothing is so much to be recommended as slow proceeding, waiting and watching until the child is ready to profit by the operation of our method. "If you make fire with green wood you will get more smoke than heat."

Finally, we come to the child in whom the will-power predominates. It must be ruled and corrected by law, by timely command, by regular application to work. Yet let me say at once that this method must not in any way be understood to weaken the principle that "a good teacher rules by influence rather than by coercive restriction." The habit of constantly impressing and enforcing orders by the use of reproving words is a sure way to fail in obtaining respect for either the law or the teacher; and oft-repeated correction of this kind seriously injures the child's disposition. Let the teacher who finds that he or she has to control such children watch their propensities and ebullitions of self-will for some time before appearing to notice and therefore to punish them, unless there is question of gross faults which force themselves on our attention.

Then, having seen what needs correction, let the announcement be made, as coming from a superior authority, of certain rules of conduct to be observed in the class under proportionate penalty. These rules should, it must be observed, be *but few,* and such as can readily be observed under ordinary circumstances. If they be sufficiently definite to cover the more common and disturbing breaches of discipline, it will give the teacher an excuse to ignore lesser faults and to use discretion at times toward indulgence, until the general improved tone of discipline in the class allows a further refining. There is harm in making rules which the teacher foresees, or ought to foresee, will not or can not be observed. Assuming that a good, well-considered set of rules is made, the children will, of course, at once test its strength by violating it. The teacher is sorry and remains quite amiable; but there is the inexorable law with its penalty, which is to blame for all the poutings and tears that follow. Gradually the child, finding that it has to fear only the unyielding law, and not the teacher, who sympathizes with the young delinquent while quietly urging obedience and, by it, an avoidance of the painful consequences of violating the rules, begins to observe the latter. Thus the same force which leads the child to obedience leads it also to esteem for the teacher, and the element of courage is developed through the will, which turns in the direction of order and docility.

There is one exception to this method of correction in which the educator maintains a constantly pleasant manner whilst appealing to the inexorable demand of the law of order. This exception is the case of any open violation of the reverence due to God, or of holy things which are understood to in-

volve directly His honor. A teacher who can make upon the child the impression that he or she condones everything except offenses against God, at once elevates the child to a higher plane of view, and secures absolute authority over the pupil. In all matters causing faults against order, propriety, application to scholastic tasks, etc., the child encounters a more or less definitely foreseen penalty inflicted by the existing rules, which process gradually forces upon the young mind the recognition of the eternal order of things, and instinctively develops convictions regarding the intrinsic value of law. In these cases the teacher has hardly to use any words. But it is different when there is question of the honor due to God, and of sin; then it is well that the child should meet the well-governed but evident indignation of the teacher. For in doing so it will recognize in the teacher the true and consistent representative of God, a sentiment which elevates the dignity of the teacher, and supplies those forces for governing the child that may otherwise be lacking, either by reason of the absence of certain personal qualities in the teacher or by reason of circumstances in which it is particularly difficult to control the child.

Yet, whatever necessity there may be for applying correction, whether in matters of mere deportment and application, or in the more serious cases of sin, the double rule of moderation and of seeking if possible a permanent remedy which goes to the core of the evil holds good throughout the educational process. Constantly rehearsed correction of faults is never, on the whole, successful. Take a shrub in your garden, some root-branch of which bends across the path. Every time you pass by you beat it aside or you lift it up; but it comes down each

time, and tires and irritates you in the constant effort to avoid its straggling annoyance. Is there no other way? Yes; take a string, tie it around the bush to uphold the forward branch; shortly the cells in the lower part of the stem contract and accommodate themselves to the forced position, and by degrees growing stronger they will hold the branch in place, so that when the string is removed the shrub is orderly by its own developed strength. Of course you must measure your string and note the quality; not bind too tight lest the branch break, nor use a string too weak lest it snap and the relaxed branch hurt some passer-by.

We have seen that the quality of courage essential in a good teacher is developed in the pupil by bringing under control the heart, the mind, and the will—the operation of the threefold center of action. To do this effectually it is necessary not only that the teacher ascertain the disposition or peculiar character of the child, but also that she should gauge the limits of its capacity in the threefold direction before indicated. This demands in the teacher the virtue of justice, so as to form a proper estimate of what the child can do, and also to act out the sentiments which that estimate inspires. Fortitude or courage when not balanced by justice becomes a danger and a temptation, inasmuch as it yields to impulses of zeal, of discouragement after failure, of haphazard ventures and foolhardy undertakings, which destroy the previous efforts of better-minded educators.

Justice, as defined by the scholastics, is the consistent or sustained determination to render to every one his proper rights. *Every one*—that is to say, first to God; then to those who directly represent His claims in the Church; next, to those who

represent the civil and social order; and finally, to our fellow-men, the images of God.

It is important that we recognize the fact that, in the educational process, justice as a supernatural virtue is for the most part to be built upon justice as a natural virtue. And this gives value to the study of the *classics*. The pupil learns to recognize that there is such a thing as natural virtue, and to look for it, and respect it in those who are not of the household of the faith. Furthermore, it will escape that insidious view so dangerous in practice, though defensible in theory, namely, that, because faith furnishes an antidote to the malice of sin, therefore Catholics are excusable for neglecting the external virtues of which non-Catholics, who are, often falsely, supposed to polish only the outside of the platter, are as a rule more careful. The child will learn that truthfulness, charity, purity, are virtues which may be cultivated by those who are not so fortunate as to be in the fold of Christ, and that these virtues dispose them for the grace of faith; and the fact that these gifts are infinitely ennobled by baptism does not establish a claim of superior merit, but only one of deeper gratitude, together with the graver duty of guarding the treasure with more fidelity. On the other hand, the child will also be made aware of the fact that the passions are scars and weaknesses which result from original sin, and that religious training and the grace of faith do not so much eradicate the passions, as rather teach us how to subdue them.

Justice likewise requires that the teacher keep the pupil alive to a proper estimate of the scientific studies for which the young mind may feel an attraction, or possess special aptitude. The sciences are disciplines. They aid us in the discovery of

truth; but it must not be forgotten that they always rest upon fallible senses and fallible reason. They can not by their demonstrative power supersede the facts of revelation, for the truth of which God's testimony vouches, even when we do not understand them. Pious legends are not, of course, facts of revelation; though it must be noted that the temper of mind which easily rejects or treats with disrespect the reputed manifestations in the supernatural order which command the respect of good and intelligent persons of any age or country is not a healthy one. Nevertheless, it is a singular fact, due probably to the proneness toward wrong ingrafted in human nature by original sin, that the mind will accept as demonstrated any plausible scientific hypothesis, while it rejects divine truths which rest upon much superior motives of credibility. This tendency of the naturally scientific mind toward skepticism needs to be guarded against and counteracted in early life, when the rudiments of the sciences are being taught; and it is done by emphasizing the difference between supernatural and natural causes and effects.

The principle of justice must likewise be steadily kept sight of in cases where the teacher is bound to punish the pupil. The minister of penalty must ever preserve the dignity and impartiality of an instrument of the Eternal Lawgiver. Thus the exercise of this virtue forestalls all morbid exaggeration, all manifestation of caprice, of weakness in temperament, or of preferences based on individual likes and dislikes.

It may be asked: how can a teacher cast off the natural likes or dislikes called forth by the disposition of the children? The answer is that, while it is impossible to divest one's self of the natural impression which attractive qualities in the child or their

contraries inspire, we are not forced to manifest or act upon such impressions; nay, we are bound, in justice to our responsibility as educators, to counteract the dislikes we may feel toward a child, and even more the natural attraction, especially when it is based mainly upon the impression of the senses. The teacher must keep an eye on the useful rather than the beautiful qualities of the child's nature. We may not like iodine in some of its forms, exhibiting ugly grayish color and a pungent repulsive odor; but we know its salutary uses as a medicine, and prefer it so, rather than in the form of the brilliant and beautiful purple vapors which it assumes when heated in a retort. The child's unattractive qualities are the ones that the educator must work upon; they are the steps toward its reform and ultimate salvation; in time we may be able to spiritualize these homely forms, when they will rise and take on the brilliant beauty of which they are capable under the influence of supernatural fervor. Thus acting from principle and not upon feelings, the teacher personally cultivates the virtues of disinterestedness, self-denial, and wisdom, which supply to the soul everything needful for the perfect accomplishment of a teacher's important work; for wisdom, says the sacred writer (Wis. x. 10), leads those that are just through the right ways, and shows them the kingdom of God, and gives them the knowledge of the holy things, and makes them honorable in their labors, and completes all their works for them. *"Justum deduxit Dominus per vias rectas, et ostendit illi regnum Dei, et dedit illi scientiam sanctorum, et honestavit illum in laboribus, et complevit labores illius."*

There can indeed be no reason for discouragement in the seemingly toilsome work of the religious

teacher if the rule of justice, which is the rule of the religious life, be kept before the mind. The child will pattern itself after the living model before it, and will reflect the spirit and the action of the teacher. To be successful educators we have to strive to express in our conduct what we would teach to the child: *"Qui autem fecerit et docuerit, hic magnus vocabitur"* (Matt. v. 19). That demands, as we have seen, courage regulated by justice; but it also means assured victory in the domain of true knowledge, true wisdom, which is the greatest power on earth. *"Et certamen forte dedit illi ut vinceret, et sciret quoniam omnium potentior est sapientia"* (Wis. x. 12). In other words, if the vocation of the religious teacher is a call to labor and self-denial, it is also a call to the noblest victory; for He that bade us follow Him in this work "gave a strong conflict" that we "might overcome, and know that wisdom is mightier than all." And if our confidence were nevertheless to fail us in the midst of the struggle, we need but remember that our teacher's chair is the footstool that leads to the "Seat of Wisdom," our blessed Lady, whom the language of the Church identifies with the Wisdom of Holy Writ. *"Venite filii,"* she whispers; *"audite me, timorem Domini docebo vos"* (Ps. xxxiii. 12). She herself is the model of the perfect religious educator, and the qualities which I have set forth as requisite in the latter are beautifully portrayed in the antiphon with which the Church intones the canticle of the Magnificat on Our Lady's feast: *"Virgo prudentissima, quo progrederis? quasi aurora valde rutilans. Tota formosa et suavis es, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol—(terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata)."*

With the inspired seer we ask the Virgin Mother of Christ what, in her most perfect foresight (*Pru-*

dentissima), she points out as the characteristics of true progress (*quo progrederis*). And the answer is: It is a progress that enlightens by the gradual and temperate development of the affection, even as the blush of the rising sun sends forth its light and heat (*aurora valde rutilans*) with a real yet measured intensity. *Tota formosa,* that is, well formed, well instructed in every part. *Suavis*—always pleasant. *Pulchra ut luna*—fair by reason of the divine Sun, which reflects His light in the teacher, moved by the forces of a supernatural love. *Electa ut sol*—the chosen, the elect of Christ, and like to Him in the beautiful spirit of charity which dispenses light and warmth and fostering care to the young growth that rises toward the heavens. Nor is this all. *Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata* marks the Religious above all others as a teacher of a noble band united like a well-ordered army in battle array to fight for truth and virtue, an army which, by its very order, inspires that holy fear and reverence which is the beginning of wisdom, a wisdom on which depends all our success in the sacred cause of Christian education.*

*A treatise by the Rev. Dr. H. J. Heuser, of Overbrook Seminary, Philadelphia, from *The American Ecclesiastical Review,* January, 1900. For this paper and for other articles from *The American Ecclesiastical Review* reprinted by his permission in this volume, we thank the Rev. Dr. Heuser, the urbane and scholarly Editor of that superb publication.

PART II.

Thoughts on Certain Devotions and Pious Practices Pertaining to the Spiritual Life.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The Holy Trinity.

I. God the Father.

1. GOD THE FATHER MADE YOU.

GOD made you what you are—a human being, "a little less than the angels." He "crowned you with glory and honor, set you over the works of His hands, and subjected all things under your feet." Yet this earth is not a lasting abode. You are but a pilgrim here. Heaven is to be your true home. It is there you shall see your God "face to face," and be happy with Him forevermore.

2. GOD MADE YOU FOR HIMSELF.

God made you "to His own image and likeness," and destined you for union with Himself; a union to commence here, but to be perfected in heaven; a union far beyond the loftiest conceptions and aspirations of any created being; a union altogether above nature; a union which will make you "a partaker of the divine nature," give you to live of the life of God Himself, and share in His own eternal glory and blessedness. "You shall be as gods," was after all not said without a deep foundation of truth.

3. GOD MADE YOU TO BE HIS CHILD.

To bring about this blissful union, God wills to raise you up far above your natural condition—to make you, by adoption, what His own divine Son is to Him by nature, "a beloved son, well pleasing to Him;" so that, enjoying this privilege of sonship, and living as becomes a son and child of God, you may, with full confidence, look forward to the inheritance of your "Father who is in heaven."

4. GOD ADOPTS YOU THROUGH HIS SON MADE MAN.

As God made all things through His Eternal Word, "without whom was made nothing that was made," so also has He been pleased that through the same Eternal Word you should be enabled to attain the sublime destiny for which you were created. Therefore did the Father send on earth His Son, that, "the Word being made flesh," through Him all flesh should be saved.

II. God the Son.

1. GOD THE SON REDEEMED YOU.

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Why this Incarnation of the Son of God? For your sake. Though God, He became a man like unto yourself, in order that you, a mere man, might become like unto Him, and, through Him, like unto God. He came to draw you to Himself. From heaven He descended upon earth to lift you up from earth to heaven.

But there was an obstacle in the way of His merciful design in your behalf—an obstacle which no created power could remove. It was sin. "By one man sin entered into the world." And by that sin you were made a slave of Satan, doomed to death

and endless misery, and shut out forever from heaven. What did Christ do? He, the Son of God, made man, took upon Himself that sin, and the sins of all men, in order to atone for them, and blot them out. He, the "Lamb of God, took away the sins of the world." He did so by His sufferings and death. "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins, and by His bruises we are healed." And thus did He become Our Redeemer. And by His Passion and the painful sacrifice of His life He not only put away the sins which prevented your union with God, but also merited for you all the means necessary to enable you to effect that happy union.

2. JESUS CHRIST, THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

By His example Jesus Christ traced out the right road from earth to heaven. If you walk in His footsteps you will assuredly reach one day your true home above. He is "the Way."

By His teaching He made known all truth necessary for salvation. If you believe in His word, it "will enlighten you," and prove "a lamp to your feet, and a light to your paths." He is "the Truth."

By His death He obtained for you that sublime gift of divine grace, which is the spiritual life of your soul. If your soul be adorned with it, through life and in death, then will you "live unto God," in time and in eternity. He is "the Life."

3. JESUS CHRIST ENTRUSTED THE MEANS OF SALVATION TO HIS CHURCH.

In order to put the means of salvation within easy reach of you, Jesus Christ founded His Church, and built it upon a solid foundation, even upon a rock, so

that "the gates of hell itself should never prevail against it." This Church He endowed with His own divine power and authority, and enriched with all the treasures of His grace and truth, so that it might teach you without error, administer unto you the life-giving sacraments, and direct you safely and securely on the road to heaven.

4. THE MEANS OF SALVATION ARE APPLIED TO YOU BY THE HOLY GHOST.

All that Jesus Christ did, however, was but a preparation for your individual sanctification and salvation. It was through the agency of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity that the work was to be completed and perfected. Therefore was the Holy Ghost sent to you from above by the Father and the Son.

III. God the Holy Ghost.

1. GOD THE HOLY GHOST SANCTIFIES YOU.

God's Holy Spirit came upon you for the first time in Baptism, when you were "born again of water and the Holy Ghost." It was then He actually made you a child of God, pouring forth into your soul the priceless gift of sanctifying grace, merited for you by Jesus Christ. And having made you a child of God, He also provided you with the necessary helps to enable you to conduct yourself as such, and by due obedience and submission to His will to reach His home in heaven.

2. THE HOLY GHOST ABIDES WITHIN YOU.

When the Holy Spirit of God first came to you, He came to stay and abide with you forever. He took complete possession of your soul, replenishing it with His choicest gifts, especially with His love

and charity. Your heart became His dwelling-place and tabernacle, your very body His living temple; your whole being was sanctified by His divine presence within you.

3. THE HOLY GHOST IS THE BOND OF UNION BETWEEN YOU AND GOD.

As the Holy Ghost is the substantial bond of union between the Father and the Son, so is He also, through His personal indwelling in your soul, the bond of union between God and yourself. And having once established that ineffable union and divine alliance He leaves nothing undone to preserve and strengthen it, till at length it attains its full measure of perfection in heaven. By the secret workings of His grace in your heart, and by the outward ministrations of the Church, of which He Himself is the life-giving principle, He labors unceasingly to keep you ever more closely united to God.

4. THE HOLY GHOST CASTS OFF NO ONE.

Should you at any time have the misfortune to sever that union by grievous sin, and so expel the good Spirit from His dwelling-place within you, yet He will not altogether forsake you, nor entirely give you up into the hands of your enemies. Just as a bird that is wantonly driven away from its nest keeps fluttering and flying about in the near vicinity, ready to at once return to its home on the departure of the unfriendly hand that disturbed it, so will this heavenly Dove, even when most unkindly offended by you and banished from your soul, still keep hovering around, in the hope of speedily regaining possession of His rightful abode. The still voice of His grace will whisper to you of your soul's sad condition, bring home to you your guilt, and urge

you to sorrow and repentance. And at the first sign of a surrender on your part—of a humble acknowledgment of your waywardness and of a desire for reconciliation—this divine Dove will swiftly approach you, return to you sweetly on the wings of love, and make you His own once more, giving back to you all that you had lost through sin.

5. THE HOLY GHOST IS THE FOUNT OF LIFE AND STRENGTH.

The divine Spirit is the source and origin of all that is good within you. He it is who enables you to see things in their true light, and take a correct view of them; to think, and speak, and act at all times in a right way. Every pious thought your mind conceives; every holy desire and aspiration your heart elicits; every profitable word that passes your lips; every noble and meritorious action that beautifies your life—all these come from the Holy Ghost, and through Him receive their increase, their maturity, and their perfection.

It is He who enables you to pray in a manner pleasing to heaven and beneficial to yourself; to hear the word of God so as to keep it; to so worthily approach the sacraments as to be ready to suffer everything, even death itself, if needs be, rather than betray your faith and religion.

In a word, it is the Holy Ghost who, by His grace, enlightens you to know what is good and virtuous, and strengthens you to act in accordance with that knowledge by avoiding all that is evil and shunning every sinful and vicious practice.

6. THE HOLY GHOST IS YOUR COMFORTER.

The Holy Ghost, "the God of all comfort," stands by you during the whole course of your mortal

career, and after death, until you are safe in your Father's home. When temptation assails and wearies you, He is there to lend a helping hand, to bear you up, lest you become downcast and despondent, and fall away. In times of sorrow and sadness He pours into your grief-stricken soul the balm of His heavenly consolation. In the midst of the troubles, trials, and contradictions of life He mitigates and sweetens your sufferings by the unction of His grace, and fills you with joy and gladness. At any time that your cross is heavier than usual, and you feel weak and faint, and are ready to sink beneath the burden, then, by holding up to your vision the glory that awaits you at your journey's end, He raises your drooping spirits and cheers you on to walk patiently in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. When death is at hand He shields you against the last attacks of the Evil One, and smooths your passage to eternity. And should divine Justice demand that your soul, when freed from its body of flesh, be for a time confined to the prison-house of fire, "until you pay the last farthing," even there will this sweet Spirit be with you, to soothe the ardor of the torturing flame and comfort you in your affliction. And He will also inspire charitable souls on earth to think of you, and show their sympathy and compassion, and bring succor and relief to you in your distress. And when at length your soul shall be thoroughly cleansed of all its sins and imperfections, and ready to go to heaven, it is this same Spirit of love that will bear you aloft, present you to your Father's embrace, and place you on your throne of glory. And, finally, it is He, too, who will clothe you again on the Last Day with your body—a body glorious and impassible—to shine forever as one of Christ's saints in His own blessed kingdom above.

7. GOD IS TO BE GLORIFIED FOR ALL HE HAS DONE FOR YOU.

Give, then, glory to God for all He has done for you! Glory to the Father, who made you for heaven! Glory to the Son, who redeemed you in order to put you on the right road to heaven! Glory to the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies you by applying to your soul the merits of the Redemption purchased for you, and brings you to your Father who is in heaven.

8. THE HOLY GHOST TO BE GLORIFIED IN AN ESPECIAL MANNER.

On the part of God, each of the three divine Persons loves you alike with a love that is infinite and eternal. Yet, as you, on your part, owe everything, immediately and directly, to the mysterious operations of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, it is but right that you should honor Him with a special tribute of adoration, thanksgiving, and love.*

*From *The Paraclete*, by P. Marianus Fiege, O.M.Cap.

CHAPTER XLIX.

The Holy Ghost and Religious Orders.

Call to the Religious State a Special Grace of the Holy Ghost.

It is to the soul of every Religious that these words of the Holy Ghost may be applied in a special manner: "Behold, I will allure her, and I will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart."

You who are a Religious, tell me, who "allured" you away from the vanities of a deceitful world? Who "led" you to your abode of sweet seclusion and retirement? Who first "spoke to your heart" of the peaceful service of God in the cloister? Who encouraged and strengthened you to "leave all things and follow Christ"? Who enabled you to consummate the sacrifice, when by the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, you made of yourself a whole burnt-offering, and fastened yourself, so to speak, with Jesus to the cross? Who has ever since that moment enabled you to be faithful to the solemn promises you then made, and to be diligent in the discharge of the sublime duties of your noble calling? Who still aids you to lead that life of prayer and recollection so necessary to you? Who is the source and fount of the interior life you now lead—a life utterly unknown to the lovers of the world? Who gives you strength to practice the virtues befitting your exalted state? Who encourages and comforts you amid the many trials and hardships incident to your mode of life?

"I will speak and do thou answer me." Is not all this the special work of the Holy Ghost, who has singled you out from among the rest of mankind and called you to this blessed state of life?

RELIGIOUS ORDERS THE SPECIAL WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Who inspired holy men and women with the idea of establishing those numerous Religious Orders, Congregations and Societies, which now exist in the Church of God, both as an ornament to enhance her beauty and as a bulwark to defend her against her enemies? Who aided these holy founders to draw up the saintly Rules and salutary Constitutions by which the lives of their followers were regulated and sanctified, and which in many instances have all the outward marks of a special divine inspiration?

Who has raised so many Religious to the very height of perfection and endowed them with extraordinary gifts, so that they have become renowned for holiness of life and the fame of miracles, and that "their memories are held in benediction from generation to generation"?

"I will speak and do thou answer me." Is not all this, once more, the work of the divine Spirit, who by these wonderful institutions proclaims Himself, in a visible and tangible manner, the Spirit of holiness and perfection!

EXHORTATION TO RELIGIOUS TO PRACTICE DEVOTION TO THE HOLY GHOST.

Religious soul! Can you be conscious of all you owe to the Holy Ghost, and not be moved to be devoted to Him in a very special manner? Can you feel burning within you the fire of divine love and be heedless of Him who is the very breath of that fire?

Ah, then, let the Spirit of God reign entirely in your hearts, that He may set them yet more on fire. Fire is what you need. "I came to cast fire on earth and what will I but that it burn?" Where there is fire, there is life, motion, and activity; there is true zeal and devotedness; and thence, too, will shoot forth into a cold, dismal and dreary world flashes of light and rays of warmth, by which many a poor soul that "sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death" shall be enlightened and set on fire. Then "be you filled with the Holy Spirit" in a very special manner, so as to live, love, work and suffer for Him alone; and, being yourself filled with the Holy Spirit, make known His love and mercy everywhere, so that all may come under the empire of His love and mercy, and that God may be ever more glorified.*

*From *The Paraclete.*

CHAPTER L.

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

How to Live by the Spirit.

THOSE who believe in the indwelling of the Holy Ghost are bound to use every means to live by Him who has given Himself to them. We live by Him, and we must make it manifest that we live by Him. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 25). In other words, just as a man's life and career are the result of his character, endowments, and acquirements, so the result of this presence within us of the Spirit of Jesus must be a supernatural activity corresponding with the divine principle which thus animates us. "Thou shalt send forth Thy Spirit," says the Psalmist, "and they shall be created" (Ps. ciii. 30). Create me, O Spirit of God! Leave me not to my nature! Leave me not to the earth, to sense, to the flesh, to human judgment and opinion; but give me other faculties and higher powers, that I may live in the region of the spiritual and the supernatural!

The chief effects of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our soul and heart should be fear, divine love, and peace. It would seem, perhaps, as if we should add understanding to these three. But although the principal office of the Holy Ghost, according to the words of Our Lord, is to teach, yet the kind of teaching here meant is not teaching in the ordinary sense of the word. Intellectual illumination, in the strict acceptation of the term, is only rarely given by the Holy Spirit directly. It was given to the

apostles because they were the apostles. It is given to many apostolic men, as the world goes on—to great doctors and saintly pastors. But "teaching," as it regards the greater number of souls, results rather in the firm and luminous grasp of conclusions than in the gift of proving such conclusions. It means the gift of being right, of loving what is right, and of enjoying what is right. It means wisdom rather than understanding. We pray to the Holy Ghost to "illuminate our intellect"—but it does not mean that we ask for learning, but for enlightenment as a means to piety.

The first manifestation of the indwelling Spirit is holy fear. In the Scriptures fear is called sometimes the "beginning of wisdom" (Ecclus. i. 16), and sometimes wisdom itself (Job xxviii. 28). In the first chapter of Ecclesiasticus, in which the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is most beautifully described under the name of Wisdom, fear is first said to be the beginning of wisdom, and presently the "fulness of wisdom" (*ibid.* 20). It may be called both. For when we say that the result of the presence of the Holy Ghost is fear, we refer to a very deep and most important effect which that presence has upon our relations with Almighty God. Perhaps there has been a moment in our lives when we remember passing to a state of *consciousness of God.* Our previous state may have been ignorance, or indifference, or sin, or tepidity, or all of these at once. But the hour came when we began to feel God—to fear, reverence, apprehend God—to be anxious about Him; to be anxious about ourselves, our destiny, our career, our whole life from its beginning to its end. Then we began to understand the awfulness of God's majesty, and the inevitableness of His power. Then we began to see how our beginning

and our end were in His hands. We seemed to get a glimpse of eternity. We stood in the presence of death. We felt the tremendous anxiety of the Judgment. With these thoughts there came a consciousness of sin. We began to mourn for the commissions and omissions of our youth and ignorance. We seemed to be standing on the brink of a precipice, with destruction threatening us. All this had the effect of making us turn to God—of urging, of driving us to God, as our only hope, our one and only Friend. It was a great grace. But probably that grace may have remained with us still. We have at this moment a habitual attention and reverence for God; we live in the sight of our last end; we meditate on the four last things; we dread the defilement of sin, enter into the seriousness of life, and are on the alert as to its spiritual dangers. We feel we must belong to God and save our immortal soul, cost what it may. O happy state of conversion! O admirable working of the Holy Spirit! For it is He who has filled us with this filial and salutary fear. It is a state and condition entirely opposed to anything which could result from mere human reason, or from the promptings of sense, of self-love, of worldly wisdom or of human prudence. The worldling possesses it not. His fears, his apprehension, look in quite another direction. He is blind to judgment, to the certainty of death, to the majesty of God. He seems to be deficient in some power or faculty, which the follower of Christ is endowed with. And this is true. The follower of Christ lives by the Holy Spirit. O blessed Comforter, give me grace to remember Thee!

The second effect of the presence of the Spirit in the spirit of man is divine love. When it is called the "second," it is not to be understood that these

three effects are not simultaneous. Wherever the Holy Ghost is, there they are, as a habit of the soul, and there they ought to be as its life and activity. Divine love manifests itself in the tender, affectionate disposition of the heart toward God as a Father and Friend. Just as the worldling loves other human beings — relatives, benefactors, congenial spirits, or perhaps loves no one but himself—so the spiritual man cares for God. He does not always feel toward God with the intensity of sensibility which is met with in earthly love and liking. But his will and reason adhere to his heavenly Father. And by dint of thought and reflection, by dwelling in meditation on what God is, by living in His presence, by arousing and exciting all his being to praise Him, the time comes when the "whole" heart is given to Him. Thus we see in devout persons a tenderness and affectionateness to Almighty God which keep them in an attitude of constant concern about His interests, as well as in constant certainty that He loves them. They love, also, for His sake, that stupendous manifestation of Himself in the Incarnation. They love the sacred humanity in all its mysteries, from Bethlehem to the cross. They are fondly filial to His blessed Mother, who is so bound up with all that He Himself is and does. The holy angels and the saints are dear to them, as immortal spirits who are the conquest of the precious blood. Every trace of God on earth is precious to them. They would die for that Church which He has acquired by His blood. They glory in the Blessed Sacrament and in the whole of that sevenfold dispensation where the precious blood flows. There is no man or woman or child but is the object of their deep and warm interest and sympathy, as being the beloved child of God, destined for the

beatific vision. Contrast this spirit with that of the worldly person! What are his sentiments about the Church, the saints, the Holy Eucharist, the sacraments, the souls of Christ's little ones? What are his feelings to God Himself? From the bottom of your heart give thanks to that Paraclete who has lifted you to this heavenly love of heavenly things!

Of peace, which is the third effect of the indwelling of the Spirit, little need be said here. To understand what is meant, let us remember that the endeavor to live by the Spirit naturally and inevitably entails a continuous conflict. Our life is a "warfare" —because fear and love, as set in motion by the Spirit, are at variance with a score of other propensities and inclinations of our nature. The peace, therefore, which is here meant, is that deep, fundamental, and substantial tranquillity which subsists in the soul, in spite of innumerable conflicts on the surface. This is a gift of the indwelling Spirit. Thus, when we are in anxiety as to what course to take, or what means to employ, in order to draw nearer to Christ, such anxiety will not (if the Spirit acts in us) deprive us of peace. In questions of vocation, for example, there is a sweet abandonment to God's will felt through all the troubles and the uncertainty of the process of decision. Temptations, again, could never drive the truly spiritual man to desperation or sting him into recklessness. Our dealings with others, even when our self-love is ruffled, or our rights invaded, or our good name injured, will never move our hearts from the attitude of charity. Nor will any kind of violent, heavy, or oppressive occupation separate us from God. His peace, as the Apostle says, "surpasseth all understanding" (Philip. iv. 7); that is, no one who engages in the conflict of life with merely human motives can

conceive what it is to be at peace even when you are fighting. This is the peace that we pray for, that we wish to others, that is expressed so constantly in the forms of the Church; it is the special peace of the Incarnation, brought to the earth by the Prince of peace, and breathed over all the world by His Spirit. Keep me faithful, O divine Spirit, to Thy presence, that I may never lose the tranquillity of Thy operation! Anchor my soul deep down in the everlasting foundations firmly fixed by Thy power and Thy goodness, that no trial may move me, but that my fear and my love may grow for evermore in the supernatural tranquillity of Thy majesty!

For purposes of self-examination, then, and in order to arouse ourselves to cooperate with the Holy Spirit of God thus given to us, we may ask ourselves:

1. Have we a keen feeling for the supernatural? Do we view things from the point of view of faith? Do we value the Mass, the sacraments? Are we in the habit of putting our eternal interests first? Are we anxious for the salvation of others? Or, on the other hand, are we indifferent in matters of piety; careless in spiritual duties; inclined even to show contempt for small religious observances; fond of the world and its applause?

2. Are we sensitive in regard to sin? Does the thought of mortal sin in ourselves or others fill us with horror? Are we easy under our habitual venial sins? Do we anxiously avoid unnecessary occasions of danger? Have we the good habit of making frequent, nay continual, acts of contrition?

3. Professing as we do to love God above all things, do we habitually find Him in the ordinary concerns of life? Do we see Him in superiors? in our religious brethren or sisters? in our neighbors?

in those with whom we work? Or, on the other hand, are we in the habit of dealing with all these from merely human or natural motives, scarcely taking pains to purify our intention, or to restrain our temper, our vanity, or jealousy?

4. Do we undervalue the supernatural life in general, and allow ourselves to fall in with those who talk of "common-sense" and "practical views"? Are we convinced that we may progress in nearness to God and in purity of heart? That such progress can only be made by attention to our interior life? That, in a degree, even perfection is within our reach, provided we study to detach ourselves from creatures, and watch, with much prayer, the motions of the Holy Spirit within us? Are we ashamed of the "folly of the cross," that is, of that external loyalty to Our Lord Jesus Christ which leads His servants to profess a spiritual life, and to make much of everything which is in the slightest degree connected with the cross?

Moreover, we must remember that the Holy Spirit, being a true Paraclete, that is, our true adviser and comforter, may, and will, give us illumination in those innumerable matters of the interior life on which our progress depends. It is unnecessary to say that there is a certain danger in allowing ourselves to be directed by what we take to be the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. That danger, however, is very small, provided that we remember four things: Obedience must always overrule what seems to be an inspiration; we must always be open with our director; an inspiration which interferes with the due carrying out of our state of life can not be from the Holy Spirit; and, lastly, whatever is unusual, extraordinary, or out of the usual way, especially in things external, must always be suspected.

Keeping these rules in view, we may humbly expect guidance in such points as the following:

1. The government of the tongue, and the moderation of doubtfully useful conversation. Most people lose much time by talking, and yet it is certain that charity and duty require us to talk. The Holy Spirit will certainly guide us on this head. Neither books nor rules nor superiors can do it adequately, from the nature of the case.

2. The use of mortifications. Practices of penance, and especially external ones, must never be adopted except by advice and obedience. What is meant here is that we require light to know how much mental pressure we ought to put upon ourselves at every moment of the day, in the matter of self-restraint. There are some who are nervously anxious to be mortifying themselves every minute, and who fear they commit an infidelity in resisting this impulse. There are others who are far too lax. Who shall direct the hesitating heart into the golden mean? Who shall keep us equally from foolish fidgetiness and from sloth? Only the promptings of the Spirit of Jesus.

3. The question of friendships is one on which books and superiors can only give general rules. Yet it is one which intimately concerns the practice of perfection.

4. When obedience does not speak clearly, it is difficult to know when to accept an office or employment, and when to refuse it. It is hard to tell whether such and such a task will only overload and distract, or whether our own good and that of our neighbors requires us to take it up.

5. We are often uncertain whether we ought to suffer certain inconveniences, or to speak and obtain their removal; whether we ought or ought not

to make a complaint against another; to apply for a change; to make an appeal.

6. Intellectual occupation, where it is not settled by rule and obedience, is another difficulty with those who would live an interior life. Must we study this and read that? Must we, for example, avoid newspapers altogether, or to what extent? Must we keep our thoughts pure from all contact with heresy, worldliness, and impurity—or must we confide in God's help, and, for good motives, make ourselves acquainted with subjects which will defile and disturb our imagination and our intellect?

In all these questions there is a right solution and a wrong one. To answer them by one's merely natural light is impossible. Neither is external guidance possible—for we should require a director to be as constantly with us as our guardian angel. There can not be a doubt that the interior Christian will, if he duly listens, hear a voice of guidance which will prevent him from going wrong. And we must not forget that this is a serious matter; for, as St. Paul says, "the wisdom of the flesh is death; but the wisdom of the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. viii. 6). "As," to quote the words of Father Baltassar Alvarez, "the abundance and perfection of vital and animal spirits strengthens the limbs and gives perfection to the functions of life and sense; and, on the contrary, the want of such vitality is injurious; so the frequency and efficacy of the divine impulses make perfect the operations of the spiritual life, and carry the soul on to sanctity, while the rareness and feebleness of such impulses leave it weak and languid."*

All men who are in sanctifying grace have the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But, as many who are

**De Discretione Spirituum,* lib. v., part 4, cap. 1; No. 10.

thus endowed do not "live by the Spirit," let us conclude by mentioning three things which may account for this.

1. The first is the habit of venial sins. There are certain habitual sins which, though by no means grave, yet spread such a torpor and coldness over the soul that the Holy Spirit can not act with His full power. Such are sins of vanity, sensuality, dislike, disobedience, worldly interests, and bad temper. If we would live by the Spirit, we must fight against habits of this kind.

2. Habitually low views of spirituality account in some measure for the want of the light of the Holy Spirit. There are some who never fully surrender themselves to a spiritual life; never own with full conviction that God and God alone must be their light and strength. To enter into spiritual views; to take the spiritual side in all things; to be determined to aim at a complete detachment, genuine mortification, and nothing less than Christian perfection—these dispositions will effectively level all barriers between the soul and its divine Sanctifier.

3. A life of worldliness, or of undue occupation, is an obstacle to the working of the Holy Ghost. A soul which is filled with the petty interests of frivolous people is deaf to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Even serious and genuine work may have the same effect, unless it is carried on in a detached spirit, and unless there are regular times for prayer and meditation. The cultivation of a retired, interior, and silent life, enables the Spirit of God to speak to the heart.*

*From Bishop Hedley's *Retreat.*

CHAPTER LI.

Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Whom We Must Follow.

"FOLLOW ME." This great word is the abridgment of the Gospel. The imitation of Christ is at once the perfection and the essence of Christianity. It is the perfection of Christianity, for there can be no holier model. Following Him we shall walk in justice, and holiness, and truth. We shall walk in the broad daylight of a heaven-taught wisdom, to which all the wisdom of the worldly-wise is folly; under His guidance we shall walk with safety and security toward that complete beatitude for which we are created, and which under the guidance of any other we should seek in vain. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "He who followeth Me walketh not in darkness." It is the essence of Christianity, "for this end did Christ live and act among us." "I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you also may do." If we do not imitate Him, we are none of His—"He who followeth Me not *can not* be My disciple."

Here then is the occupation of our life, here is our great study; to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ. Let us to-day take a lesson in this school. It is one of the first and most elementary, but it is one of the most important, because if it be learned well all the rest will be learned with great facility—and it is peculiarly important for us, who are espe-

cially bound by our institute to combine the interior with the exterior life, the rest of Mary with the solicitude of Martha.

Come with me to Nazareth. We shall find there our divine Jesus with Mary and Joseph, preparing Himself for the great mission by which He was to redeem the world, that mission in which we, His priests, are His vicegerents and in which you are His assistants. By your religious profession you are solemnly pledged to continue His life on earth, so that you may be able to say to the world, "be ye imitators of me, as I am of Christ." You have also a large share in the teaching of His doctrine. You must then adopt the same means for the accomplishment of the same end by entering into the dispositions of Jesus, by imitating as far as possible His manner of life.

Well, let us go in spirit into the little cottage of Nazareth and take a view of this poor humble family. Let us make ourselves one among them.

The first thing that strikes me with wonder, and which with the reason and the thoughts of man I could never have understood, is that my divine Saviour remains hidden and obscure in this lonely, sequestered village for the space of thirty years.

My God! what does this mean? He possessed from the moment of His conception all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, and He remains thirty years in solitude before He begins to preach. During that period He would have converted tribe after tribe, and nation after nation, and He remains in silence and obscurity. He must be at least determined to spend a long life after in the preaching of the Gospel.

No—only three years of missionary labor, and for these three years of missionary labor thirty years of

preparation. The one-eleventh of His life given to His neighbor, the rest given to Himself and God.

Again, what is the meaning of all this? Oh! "I have given you an example, that as I have done so you also may do." I must learn hence in the first place to make my own perfection the business, the great business of my life—that I must give glory to God by myself, before I get Him glory by others. I must learn hence, and it is what my Saviour particularly wishes to inculcate, that I should not be over-anxious to exercise myself in the external works of mercy until I am solidly prepared by exercise in the interior life. Jesus, who was the first great Brother of Mercy, was thirty years a novice preparing for three years of profession, and I, who am ignorant and stupid and weak in virtue, will make a noviceship of two years, preparing for a profession perhaps of thirty.

Well, be it so, since such is the will of God! but at least I shall henceforth regard every wish of neglecting my own perfection and practices of piety, for the sake of others, every idea that the time I spend in the practices of the interior life could be better spent in works of mercy, as a suggestion of the enemy. My time is not more useful nor more precious than that of my Saviour. I now see how He thought fit to portion out His. I must learn also to love and cherish this holy solitude into which God has brought me. Peter said upon Thabor, that it was good for him to be there; and I will say in this Nazareth that Jesus has made for me, that it is good for me to be here. I am here unknown and unheard of by the world. People may hear of Sisters of Mercy, but about this or that Sister of Mercy, no one in the world knows or cares anything. It was so with my Jesus; the poor villagers of Nazareth

knew that there was such a person among them; they thought Him a mild, well-conducted young man, but every one thought as much and a great deal more about himself. The members of your community, dear Sister, think you perhaps an edifying nun, but each thinks herself as good as you. Great God! the world was then occupied about kings and emperors and consuls and conquerors, and the King of kings and the Lord of lords was among them unknown and unheeded.

O God! and is this the Creator of heaven and earth that I contemplate? Yes, and He is reduced to this state for me. What a sublime humility! What a mockery of all the pride and folly of man!

Oh! will we not love the lowliness of Our Saviour, and will we not love to be lowly with Him? He could have attracted the attention of mankind by His supernatural knowledge, by His power over all nations, and He hides these qualities, He contents Himself with edifying those who know Him by His meekness and piety. And we wish to show every talent which God has given us, to make a parade of it and attract attention; we even pretend to talents which we have not; if we receive a little insult we are instantly on fire, every little humiliation stings us.

Ah! we have not as yet studied long enough in Nazareth. Let us go there to learn this fundamental virtue of humility, this love of contempt which is the heroism of Christianity. We shall learn it by meditating on the humiliations of Jesus, and by loving to be like Him whom we love. We have the happiness of being in circumstances like to His, so that His goodness has rendered the thing easy to us; we have only to make a virtue of necessity.

Jesus was poor in Nazareth; His birth proves it,

and He suffered all the inconveniences of poverty. He was meanly clad, He fed upon coarse food which He earned by the sweat of His brow—He lived in a poor humble cottage, a cabin rather. When I contemplate Him walking through the village in His poor workman's dress, when I contemplate Him at night eating the poor scanty meal which Mary had prepared for Him; when I see Him going to repose His wearied limbs upon a hard and comfortless bed, I ask Him, why, having all things at His disposal, He is thus destitute? and He answers me that it is to enrich me with the treasures of heaven. "For us hath He been made poor, that by His poverty we might be rich." He tells me that it is to inspire me with a sovereign contempt for the riches of the world, and to give me the sublime spirit of religious poverty which says, "I esteem all things as dung that I may gain Christ." He tells me that it is to make me content in privation, by which I resemble Him.

Well, we know the happiness of being poor too. Yes, dearly beloved sisters, blessed be God for it! we possess nothing in the world. Jesus had not whereon to lay His head, and the pillow on which we lay ours is not our own. Praise and thanks to you, good Jesus, who hast called me to this. What is better, I have the happiness of enduring many of the inconveniences of poverty. When cold annoys me, when I am uncomfortable in my room, I will remember the indigence of Nazareth, and I will rejoice in the Lord.

Jesus labored at Nazareth. The prophetic word of David was fulfilled in Him—He was in "labors from His youth." His labor was continuous day after day —His labor was rude and humiliating. Must I not love Him when I contemplate Him straining every

limb, while the sweat runs down His blessed face, employed in some dangerous occupation, roofing one of the houses of the village? And then when I enter into the secrets of His soul, and seek the motive of all this, I find that every drop of sweat flows for me, that all this labor is undertaken for me, that at every instant, whether He works or whether, overwhelmed with fatigue, He is obliged to rest, His Heart burning with charity never ceases to offer up all to His Eternal Father for me.

I must labor too. I am here to labor. I will therefore labor generously. I will labor as incessantly as my strength will permit. I will labor not at what pleases my own fancy, but in what God wishes me to labor, and I will labor in union with Jesus. During the day, I will offer up my fatigue in union with His to God, and at night, "in peace together with Him shall I sleep and rest."

When Jesus labored, He never met, to be sure, with any reproaches from Joseph; but how often after doing His utmost was He not rebuked by the rude farmers or villagers of Nazareth! Even after He had worked miracles, they attempted to throw Him from the pinnacle of a mountain. In the same way after doing my best I will frequently not succeed in pleasing all. I may be frequently reminded of my want of capacity—sometimes reproached perhaps with idleness—sometimes I may receive a rude rebuff from those to whom I shall offer the sweet alms of spiritual mercy. So much the better, I will be the more like to my Saviour. I will say to my Father, who sees not as man sees: You know, my God, that what I could do I have done. If I have to reproach myself with sloth I ask your pardon. If my defect arises from incapacity I humbly resign myself into your hands, I am as clever as you wish

me to be. If others are not satisfied with me, you will be. You who see in secret will reward me.

I have now learned from my divine Saviour in Nazareth the love of obscurity, the love of humility, the love of poverty, the love of labor. I shall endeavor to learn this good lesson by heart, and commit it so to memory that I may never forget it.*

Another lesson that we must learn from our divine Master at Nazareth is that of obedience. "And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them." Jesus Christ, the uncreated wisdom of the Father, was obedient to Mary and Joseph; He renounces His own judgment, submits cheerfully to the will of a poor carpenter and his wife, and is guided by their counsels. "He was subject to them." This is the record of thirty years of my Saviour's life. Holy obedience! How precious, how meritorious, how great, how sublime thou must be in the sight of God, since my Lord and Master spent thirty years in teaching me this one virtue!

In order that you may be aroused and impelled to a more perfect imitation of this admirable example of obedience, which Christ has given you in regard to your Superiors under whom God has placed you, or may hereafter place you, reflect on the advantages that are derived from this virtue. Can anything more acceptable be offered to God? As we read in Father Baxter's *Meditations:* "God is appeased with victims and sacrifice as the chief acts of religious worship; but He assures us Himself that obedience is still more acceptable to Him. 'Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams' (1 Kings xv. 22). And

*From Most Rev. Dr. Moriarty's *A Retreat of Eight Days for Religious:* Meditation "On Jesus of Nazareth"

with good reason, observes St. Gregory; for 'in sacrifice the flesh of another is offered, but in obedience our own will is killed and the whole man offered in sacrifice.'

"There is no safer way to heaven than the road of obedience. Saints and holy Fathers teach us that there is nothing more dangerous in a spiritual life than to be our own guide and to follow our own judgment. Hence St. Bernard observes: 'He that is his own master has a fool for his scholar'; for, as Solomon writes, 'The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he who is wise hearkeneth unto counsels' (Prov. xii. 15).

"In the virtue of obedience all other virtues are included, and therefore by holy Fathers it is called the guardian of them all. He who is obedient can not fail to be humble, patient, meek, charitable, and master of himself; for, as the Wise Man says, 'An obedient man shall speak of victory' (Prov. xxi. 28). Form a growing esteem, then, for this virtue, and exercise it in imitation of Christ whenever occasions offer."

"Obedience," says St. Catharine of Bologna, "is without doubt more meritorious than any austerity. What austerity is greater than to keep the will continually submissive?" "Obedience," says St. John of the Cross, "is a penance of the reason; this is what renders the sacrifice more agreeable to God than corporal penance. God loves the least degree of obedience in you better than all the services you could render Him."

"A single drop of perfect obedience is of a million times more value than an entire vase of the most sublime contemplation," says St. Magdalene of Pazzi. St. Felix, the Capuchin, always showed the most perfect readiness to execute lovingly the orders

of his Superiors, no matter what they might be. He carried so far his love for obedience that his Superiors were obliged to refrain in his presence from manifesting their inclinations, lest the saint might regard it as a command and hasten to execute it. The least sign of their will was sufficient to cause him to obey instantly.

"It is more meritorious to pick up a straw through obedience," declares Rodriguez, "than to preach, to fast, or to chastise the body, if in so doing we follow our own will." St. Frances, one day while reciting the office of the Blessed Virgin, was interrupted many times in the same anthem by her husband calling her. Our Lord manifested in a most singular manner that her obedience was most agreeable to Him.

A holy Religious, desiring to animate herself to perform all things through obedience, with eyes upon her crucifix, which she lovingly kissed, would say to her Saviour: *"Factus es obediens usque ad mortem,"* "Thou wast obedient even unto death."

"Would you know who are true Religious? It is they who by mortification have so subjugated their wills that they know not how to will anything but by the command or advice of their Superior," says St. Fulgentius. St. Teresa was well persuaded of this truth. She said if all the angels told her to do a thing, and her Superior commanded her to perform the contrary, she would obey the order of her Superior. "Obedience to Superiors," added she, "is commanded by God in Holy Scripture! consequently it is of faith. One can not be deceived in obeying, while revelations are subject to illusions."

"Every one who enters Religion should leave his own will outside the door of the monastery," are the words of St. Francis de Sales, "that he may have no

other will but that of God." When St. Dositheus consecrated himself to the Lord in the religious life he divested himself entirely of his own will, and submitted it entirely to that of his Superior. He made known to him his temptations, his thoughts; and by this entire renouncement of himself, and great openness of heart, he obtained a peace, a tranquillity of soul that nothing could disturb.

"Obedience is the abridgment of perfection and of all spiritual life," says Father Alvarez, "it is a means the least painful, the least dangerous, the surest, and the shortest to enrich one's self in virtue, and to arrive at our desired end, which is eternal life." St. Magdalene of Pazzi, on her death-bed, said that when she recalled all that had happened during the course of her life, nothing gave her so much tranquillity as the thought that she had never been guided in anything by her own will or her own judgment; that she had always followed the will or judgment of her Superiors and directors.

"The demon, knowing that there is no other path which leads so quickly to the summit of perfection as that of obedience," declares St. Teresa, "turns many from the practice of this virtue through an appearance of good." St. Bridget had a great attraction for corporal penances. She gave herself to these with, if possible, too much ardor. Her director perceived this and desired to correct it; in consequence he retrenched a part of the mortifications the saint had been accustomed to perform. The saint obeyed, but it was not without much pain lest she might become unmortified. Our Lord instructed and consoled her by causing her to hear these words: "Of two persons desiring to fast, if the one who has the liberty to do so fasts, and the other, though desiring to do so, does not, because he is under obedi-

ence and is forbidden to do so, the first receives a recompense, the second receives two—one for the desire he had to fast, and another for having obeyed."

Besides saying that Christ was obedient to His parents, the Gospel tells us simply in regard to His life from His twelfth to His thirtieth year that He increased in wisdom and age and grace before God and men. All the followers of Christ ought to make continual progress in virtue. Not to advance in the way of virtue is to recede, as all the saints teach us. St. Bernard observes: "Not to gain ground is to lose it;" this is why you must ultimately fall again into the hands of your enemies, whom you wished to escape, if you do not continually advance.

Another motive for continually advancing in virtue is compliance with the will of God. He desires our progress in purity and holiness. "Be ye therefore perfect," says Christ, "as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48). No one can be perfect or eminent in anything at once, but by degrees he must attain perfection. Hence the necessity of continual progress is evident. Furthermore, a true disciple of Christ will honor His Master by the progress that he makes in virtue. Again we read in Baxter's *Meditations:* "'The scholar that makes progress,' says the eloquent St. Bernard, 'is a glory to his master. Whoever, therefore, fails to make progress in the school of Christ is unworthy to have Him for his Master.' How shameful would it be to have studied philosophy and theology seven years, and to have made no progress, but to end as we began! How much more ought you to blush if you have become more remiss in prayer, more given to distractions, a greater lover of yourself, your own ease and pleasure, than when you first entered the

school of virtue! Endeavor, therefore, continually to advance in the glorious and honorable career of perfection.

"Many evils result from a neglect of improving in virtue. This neglect provokes the anger of God; and therefore He says to the bishop of Ephesus, in the Apocalypse, 'Be mindful from whence thou art fallen, and do penance, and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place' (Apoc. ii. 5). God may have designed you also to give light to many; take care, then, that He do not move you from your place in consequence of your tepidity and indevotion.

"This neglect deprives us of many great spiritual advantages and rewards. 'The slothful hand hath wrought poverty,' says the Wise Man (Prov. x. 4). Oh, what glory should we purchase in heaven, were we always intent on our spiritual profit, and careful to seize every occasion of exercising virtue! Be ashamed of your carelessness, and blush at your neglect in amassing those everlasting treasures which God freely offers you.

"This neglect exposes man to final ruin; for it was said of the servant who neglected to employ his talents in the service and to the advantage of his master: 'Take ye away, therefore, the talent from him, and the unprofitable servant cast ye out into exterior darkness' (Matt. xxv. 28). Excite yourself, therefore, to persevere in the way of virtue with cheerfulness. Examine upon what occasions you are accustomed to lose courage, and resolve to go forward with renovated spirit. Christ is your commander, and your reward 'exceeding great.' Doubtless Christ spent a great part of His hidden life in high contemplation and conversation with His heavenly Father; for He who could afterward say to

Martha that her sister Mary had chosen the better part, because she loved the exercise of contemplation, must have practiced it Himself most perfectly. If David 'praised the Lord seven times a day,' and at midnight rose 'to confess to Him' (Ps. cxviii. 164), with how much more reason may we suppose that Christ did? Learn, therefore, to become a man of prayer, and an interior man, both for your own sake and your neighbor's good, and be convinced that the frequent exercise of prayer is the first and the most important duty of a Christian."

Study also the characteristics of Jesus, our blessed Saviour, in His public life, as regards His exterior, His dealings with others, His manner of speaking and His deportment; then seek sincerely and strive earnestly to make them your own. Imitate your divine Master and Model. Let your greatest endeavor be to become like to Jesus. The most conspicuous virtues of Our Saviour's public life are submission to the will of His heavenly Father, zeal for His Father's glory, unbounded charity toward His neighbor, meekness, humility, patience, forbearance with others' faults and weaknesses, kindness to sinners, and compassion toward the poor, the sick, and unfortunate. He strove to become "all to all;" He went about "doing good to all."

Unquestionably our blessed Saviour possessed a charming exterior, a fascinating personality, a sweetness of speech, a quiet dignity of deportment, a gentleness and modesty of manner, that gave Him a marvelous influence over old and young, over men, women, and children. "Thou art beautiful," says the Psalmist, "above the sons of men; grace is poured abroad in Thy lips; with Thy comeliness and Thy beauty, set out, proceed prosperously, and reign."

He spoke in simple language; yet all wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from His mouth. Why did His simple words convey such an impression? Because with the latent power of divine grace, the "goodness and kindness of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us." He hated sin, but He was merciful to sinners. The Prophet Isaias said of Him that He would not be "sad nor troublesome." He had all His senses under control. His manner and His person were a reflection of the calm, the peace, the order that reigned within.

"He shall not contend, nor cry out, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not extinguish" (Matt. xii. 19, 20). Jesus is your Master, your Model. Contemplate the loveliness of Jesus, and then your own sweetness will be apparent, your own modesty will be known to all, and that modesty will edify others and preach a powerful sermon—that modesty will indicate the purity of your soul; it will also feed and nourish the spirit of interior recollection. If we had nothing else to be guided by in our judgment and appreciation of the character of Jesus, the first twelve verses of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew—the Sermon on the Mount, the discourse on the eight beatitudes—would be sufficient to convince us that the man who pronounced it was meek and humble; amiable and affectionate toward His own; patient and merciful with all.

Meditate frequently on the words of the divine Master: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the meek, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the clean of heart, blessed

are the peacemakers, blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven" (Matt. v. 3-12).

This sublime epitome of the Gospel is still further simplified by our blessed Saviour, when He says: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls" (Matt. xi. 29).

As the author of *Another Handful of Myrrh* says: "Our Lord seems to sum up all Christian perfections in these two virtues, meekness and humility, as though we had nothing else whatever to learn of Him. He says nothing of faith, hope, and charity; nothing of temperance, prudence, justice, and fortitude, evidently meaning that they were all comprised in some way in these two; either presupposed to them or following on them by natural consequence, or else actually included in their wide acceptation."

"Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart!" This is the portrait that Our Lord has left of Himself. It is beautiful. Study it every day of your life, with a view to self-improvement and greater conformity to the likeness of your divine Model. Let us bear in mind another thing—a matter of great importance. In the words of *Another Handful of Myrrh:* "It is our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ Himself, who is at once our Master and our most strict Judge, and also our kind Intercessor and our Friend. And He is now here in the midst of us, day by day, that we may make friends with Him.

"We meet Him on every side, at home and abroad,

far and near; He is never long out of our sight; we find Him at one time sick, and we visit Him; and the next time we meet Him He is poor, and we relieve Him; and then He asks us for clothes, and we take them from our back and give them to Him; or He is in trouble and we help Him; or His character is being taken away, and we put in a good word for Him; and He is lost and wandering, and we show Him the way and lead Him back to His home; and He is always getting from one difficulty into another, but we are patient with Him, and not 'weary in well-doing.' And He seems so ungrateful and undeserving and repulsive, and yet we bear with Him, remembering how we, too, before God are ungrateful and undeserving and repulsive. And He wrongs us most cruelly and beyond all justification, and we not only excuse Him where excuse is possible, but we forgive with a full, free, wide and God-like heart, even as we hope to be forgiven. And all this time we do not recognize who He is; for He is acting a part, disguising Himself from us; our eyes are held, so that we know Him not, though our hearts burn within us as we converse with Him by the way; until at last we stand trembling before our Judge, waiting in terror the word of condemnation; our eyes upon the ground in confusion. 'Hath no man condemned thee?' He says to us at length. 'No man, Lord.' 'Neither do I condemn thee;' and we raise our thankful eyes and see the face of Him who was aforetime hungry, and thirsty, and naked, and needy, and slandered, and ill-treated, and ungrateful, and undeserving, and unjust. And He says, 'Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these, you did it to Me. Inasmuch as you fed them, and clothed them, and harbored them, and defended them, and pitied them, and bore with them, and for-

gave them, you did it to Me. And now I am your friend, and I will feed you eternally with the Bread of life; and refresh you with living water, and clothe you with glory, and forgive all that is past, and will receive you into everlasting habitations.'"

CHAPTER LII.

The Three Degrees of Humility the Way to Christian Perfection.

ST. IGNATIUS, in his *Spiritual Exercises,* points out "three degrees" of humility. They correspond to the three degrees of Christian perfection, and these consist, as we read in *Manresa:* "(1) In the firm resolution to avoid *mortal sin,* even at the risk of life; (2) in the firm resolution to avoid deliberate *venial sin* at any price; (3) in the voluntary choice of whatever is *most perfect* for the service of God.

"The three degrees of humility suppose the abasement and, as it were, the annihilation of the old man within us. The third degree of humility is the highest degree of Christian perfection. It consists in preferring, for the sole love of Jesus Christ, and from the wish to resemble Him more, poverty to riches, shame to honor, etc., even if on both sides your salvation and the glory of God were equally to be found. To arrive at this third degree of humility, consider:

"1. *Its excellence.* It contains all that is most heroic in virtue, and the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ, who for love of us willingly embraced the ignominy of the cross: 'Having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame' (Heb. xii. 2).

"2. *Its happiness.* To this degree is attached (*a*) peace of heart, since nothing can trouble him who professes to love all that nature fears and abhors; (*b*) intimate union with Jesus Christ, who communi-

cates Himself fully to those souls who give themselves to Him without reserve; (*c*) the choice graces and blessings of God, on all that we undertake for His glory. 'The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise' (1 Cor. i. 27).

"3. *Its utility.* This degree is the most certain way of salvation, because it snatches us away from all the dangers inseparable from fortune and honor; the shortest way, because it delivers us at once from sin, and raises us to every virtue; the most meritorious way, because it is one uninterrupted course of sacrifices, and consequently of merits for eternity."

It is the highest ambition of the ideal Religious to arrive at the third degree of humility. As we read in Chaignon's *Meditations for Priests*, "St. Bernard distinguishes between the *truth* and the *virtue* of humility. The former shows us our nothingness and profound abjection, and the latter enables us to love this abjection itself, and makes us cheerfully consent to be nothing so that God may be all. The *truth* confounds and terrifies us; the *virtue* elevates and encourages us. The one enlightens and the other inflames. The knowledge of ourselves is nothing more than a preparation for true humility, or at most a preparation for the humility of the mind. Philosophy has reached thus far, but the humility which is the result of faith, the one which Jesus Christ teaches and which St. Gregory calls '*magistra omnium, materque virtutum*' (the mistress and mother of all virtues), this humility, we say, has its seat in the heart, and regulates its affections. 'Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.' Humility leads us to sincerely despise ourselves as being really worthy of naught but contempt, and to love our abjection as bringing

into clear relief the greatness of God. This is the first degree. The second consists in this: in desiring that all men should entertain the same sentiments concerning us, and should judge us as we judge ourselves. In the third degree, which is the most perfect, we are pleased when men act toward us conformably to the low opinion of ourselves with which we have inspired them. He who has attained this third degree is not content to suffer reproaches patiently; he accepts them joyfully and seeks for them with the ambition of worldlings for distinctions and honors. We will not say that humiliations are agreeable in themselves, but they render us like unto the Son of God humbled for our sake, and at the same time offer us a means of expressing to Him our love as well as of deserving His own love."

The fundamental principle of man's conversion from sin and his advancement to the highest Christian perfection is found in a thought of St. Augustine: *"Est homini iter ad Deum—per Deum hominem."*

"Man is a traveler; the starting-point is sin; the end to be reached is God, and the God-man is the road which leads to it," we read in the Introduction to Chaignon; "behold three classes of truths perfectly distinct.

"In the first place, man is to be *purified* by being taught how to fight against and destroy sin both in itself and in its causes. In the second place, man *converted* is led on to God, his last end, along the very safe road of the examples of Christ. 'Follow Me!' says the Saviour, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.' In the third place, man becomes intimately *united* to God by love. This is the way to perfection; it is the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive life.

"Jesus is a model of perfect humility in His life, in His Passion, and in His death. 'The Word was made flesh." The Son of God became man, and in doing so He did not choose for His condition one of prominence, of affluence and authority. No; He preferred the most abject, the most servile, the poorest of all conditions. 'He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.' Nor would He come into the world as a full-grown man, endowed with the strength and beauty of perfect manhood. No; He came in the form of an infant, weak, helpless, subject to infirmities. He was born in a stable. His cradle was a manger. He was circumcised; by submitting to the rite of circumcision He took upon Himself the mark of a sinner. He, the Son of God, fled into Egypt from the wrath of a tyrant. He was poor in exile, and He remained poor in Nazareth. Nearly all His life He labored in a carpenter's shop, living the life of a poor mechanic. In His public life He rejected all honors, He continued to live among the poor, and served them as the lowliest among them, not disdaining even to wash the feet of His Apostles. He suffered hunger and cold and persecution and every kind of human woe. Finally in His Passion His thirst for humiliations was fully satiated. Stupendous indeed were Our Lord's humiliations in His Passion. Truly He then became as He was foreshown by the prophets. 'The Man of sorrows, the Man struck by the hand of God, the last of men, a worm and not a man.' He hungered after reproaches. 'He shall be filled with them.' "

You have promised your Saviour, your divine Master, to follow whithersoever He would go. He strode like a giant in the path of humiliations, and did not seek the esteem of men; on the contrary, He

rejoiced in being despised by them. You admire the God-man in the abyss of His humiliations. Should not you find lovable whatsoever your Lord and Master loved? Bless God for all humiliations. Accept them with joy in union with Jesus, for the love of God. The true, loving spouse of Christ follows her divine Master with generosity of mind and steadiness of resolution even to the cross, "through honor and dishonor, through infamy and good fame" (2 Cor. vi. 8). She endeavors to conform her actions in everything to His. She does this out of love, but she remembers also that her glory in the next life will be commensurate with the exactness wherewith she follows Christ through this vale of tears.

The *unitive* life has various affections peculiar to itself, and these ought to be cultivated during our meditations. "The chief subjects of these affections," as Father Baxter, S.J., observes, "are:

1. Admiration of the majesty of God and the divine perfections which we contemplate.

"2. Joy and contentment, because God is absolutely perfect in Himself, infinitely good to others, and admirable in all His works.

"3. Praise and thanksgiving for His favors and benefits, with a desire of seeing and enjoying Him in order to honor and obey Him.

"4. Zeal for God's glory and the good of souls, wishing that all the world may come to the knowledge and love of the Redeemer.

"5. Confidence in the goodness and Providence of God, united with a filial respect, and the fear of being separated from Him by sin, and a sincere regret for having ever incurred His just indignation.

"6. Desire of the heavenly things which we contemplate. Everything on earth ought to appear

trifling to us, when we look up to heaven and say with the prophet, 'How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth in the courts of the Lord' (Ps. lxxxiii. 2). 'As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God!' (Ps. xli. 2.)

"By entertaining such affections as these, we ought to aim at that happy state in which, 'beholding the glory of God with open face, we may be transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord' (2 Cor. iii. 18). We should thus endeavor to become like to Him, by uniting our wills with His, and by increasing daily more and more in the knowledge and love of Him, until at length passing from this dark pilgrimage of human life we may arrive at our own bright native country, and enjoy the beatific vision for all eternity."

CHAPTER LIII.

The Blessed Sacrament.—The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Mysteries of Our Lord's Life and Passion Reproduced in the Mysteries of the Altar.

DAILY VISITS.*

"He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works: He hath given food to them that fear Him" (Ps. cx. 4, 5). The Eucharist is the abridgment of all the gifts of God, for it contains Jesus Christ, the Source of every grace and every gift. All that Jesus has ever done for our love He still continues to do in the Eucharist. There we find Jesus a Child, Jesus poor, Jesus our Teacher, Jesus the wonder-working Physician, Jesus suffering, Jesus dying for us.—*Abbé Henri Perreyve.*

How sweet it is to believe in this presence of Jesus Christ! how it touches, animates, and restrains us! Hence how suited to our needs, and how worthy of Him who has so loved us!—*Fénelon.*

Under the veil of the Most Holy Sacrament, as a vesture hanging between His presence and our sight, there is the Word Incarnate; and out from that vesture there goes forth the virtue of healing, as it went out from the hem of His garment when the poor woman touched it visibly on earth.—*Cardinal Manning.*

Our Lord has left us His body in the Holy

*With alterations and additions from Father Spencer's *The Little Grain of Wheat*

Eucharist to be therein the memorial of His Passion, the sacrifice of our altars and the nourishment of our souls.—*Lallemant.*

No tongue can express the sweetness which the fervent soul finds in the Holy Sacrament. It is enough to say that true spiritual sweetness is drunk at the fountain head.—*St. Thomas.*

By His Incarnation the Lord has given Himself to all men in general; but in this Sacrament He has given Himself to each of us in particular, to make us understand the special love which He entertains for each of us.—*St. Liguori, Sermon xxxi.*

Let no one approach the holy mysteries with a distracted and wilfully dissipated mind. Let no one think at this time of earthly or human projects. Free from earthly cares, let every one elevate himself to heaven, and unite himself with the seraphim, since he is so near the throne of the Almighty.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

The Blessed Sacrament is that Presence which makes a Catholic church different from every other place in the world; which makes it, as no other place can be, holy.—*Cardinal Newman.*

Rightly indeed is the Sacrament of the Altar called the Eucharist, that is, good grace: for in it there is not only increase of virtues and grace, but He is received whole who is the Fountain of grace. —*Master of the Sentences.*

As by the agency of light we obtain the reproduction of objects, so by exposing our souls to the rays of the Blessed Sacrament we shall receive and retain the sweet likeness of Jesus, His divine photograph; and there will be imprinted upon our very exterior itself an air of resemblance with Him, a something of His features, a something which calls to mind the meek and gentle Host.—*Mgr. Picheust.*

All the saints have considered devotion to the Blessed Sacrament the most powerful means of spiritual regeneration. Religious instruction makes us know Jesus Christ, the Eucharist makes us feel and taste Him.—*Mgr. Dupanloup.*

Without the Holy Eucharist there would be no happiness in this world; life would be insupportable. . . . In the presence of this beautiful Sacrament we are like a person dying of thirst by the side of a river—he would only need to bend his head; . . . like a poor person close to a great treasure—he need only stretch out his hand.—*Ven. Curé of Ars.*

As fire converts into itself those things upon which it has power to act; so in like manner Our Lord, who is a consuming fire, by communicating Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist, transforms us into His likeness.—*St. Dionysius the Areopagite.*

During holy Mass, the angels assist the priest, all the orders of celestial spirits raise their voices, and the vicinity of the altar is occupied by choirs of angels, who do homage to Him who is being immolated.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

From the silent tabernacle where He has fixed His abode Jesus governs and directs His Church by the authority of His presence there. At the holy table He feeds the people of His pasture, the sheep of His hand: He is the Master, the Physician, the Protector of souls that belong to Him.—*Abbé De Brandt.*

Memorial sweet, that shows the death of my dear Lord;
Thou living Bread, that life dost unto man afford;
Oh, grant that this my soul may ever live on Thee,
That Thou mayst evermore its only sweetness be.

O mystic Pelican, Jesus, my loving Lord,
Cleanse me of my defilements in Thy blood adored,
Whereof one only drop, in Thy sweet mercy spilt,
Would have the power to cleanse the world of all its guilt.

O Jesus, lying here concealed before mine eye,
I pray Thou grant me that for which I ceaseless sigh.
To see the vision clear of Thine unveiled face,
Blest with the glories bright that fill Thy dwelling-place.
—*St. Thomas Aquinas, "Adoro Te Devote."*

Jesus, "Emmanuel," "God with us," in the tabernacle is the life, the joy, the hope, the consolation, the great desire of all pious souls. "Rejoice," exclaims St. Bernard, "rejoice, ye spouses! Be in transports of joy! You possess the pledge, you hold the earnest of the Spouse, to whom you will be united in the celestial country."

Our disposition here and now should be to rejoice and exult that He is present in the Blessed Sacrament, to thank Him all the day long and to find our happiness and consolation in staying before the altar; having only one further desire, the blessedness of beholding Him with our eyes face to face. But that is too great a thing for this mortal, temporary existence, where all is yet dark and imperfect, and we live in the faint twilight of dawn (for that is what this world is), and not in the full blaze of the heavenly noonday. That we must long for and pray that it come in the future; then, in heaven we will behold Him face to face. This desire is expressed in that verse in the Canticles, where the soul, still seeing in a glass darkly, says to the Beloved, "Show me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day"—that is, she desires to behold Him face to face, in the full light of heaven. But now she must be content with the presence of her Beloved in the dark, as it were, where she can not see His human form, but, nevertheless, knows well that she has His humanity here, in the Blessed Sacrament, where He lives and feeds among pure souls; and so she says again, in the

words of the Canticles: "My Beloved to me and I to Him, who feedeth among the lilies, until the day break and the shadows flee away."

So we should find our delight in Our Lord's presence with us in the darkness of this life; and we should be very grateful that He has not left us alone in the darkness. If we greatly love and desire Him, we will greatly love His sacramental presence, that is, if we have a vivid, lively faith. And faith and love go together. If one is strong, the other is strong: if one is weak, the other is weak. St. Teresa said, after her death, appearing to one of her nuns: "What we in heaven do with the divine Essence, you on earth should do with the Blessed Sacrament." Now, in heaven they contemplate, worship, love the divine Essence—that is their occupation. So we should do with the Blessed Sacrament. In one of her books the same saint tells about a woman she knew who had a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. This woman used to wonder when she heard people talk about how happy those were who lived during Our Lord's mortal life on earth, and how much they would like to have lived then, and seen Him and spoken to Him. She used to laugh and think to herself: What do they want? They have Him now to their heart's content, if they will take the trouble to go to Him. Yes, it is a blissful thing to think that though He truly ascended into heaven, yet He did not leave us orphans, but continually descends upon earth every time that Mass is said, and remains with us, and will remain with us till the end of time. Indeed we are better off than if He had remained on earth in His human form, subject to the laws of place and extension. For then people would have to journey far to get to Him; or, if He went about the world, we could not tell when

we might expect to have Him; and very many would die without ever having been in His presence. But now we have Him at all times and in every place where there is a priest who possesses His power. And in priests Our Lord is present in another way; for in them His own eternal priesthood lives upon earth. But of this more anon.

Let me call your attention now to a very important point, namely, that in the Blessed Sacrament you have Our Lord's whole life right before your eyes, from the moment He was conceived in the womb of the holy Virgin, until His present glorified life in the kingdom of heaven; that you have before your eyes in the Blessed Sacrament, His infancy, His hidden life, His public ministry, His Passion and death, His Resurrection, and glorious life. And you have His example, not only in the past, but you have His present, living example and teaching. Now, according to all these various phases of His life, all the successive scenes of His former life on earth are represented here, and the corresponding teachings, examples, and actions are actually going on here. This is certainly a consolation. Our Lord is not in the Blessed Sacrament as *dead* or *asleep,* nor simply there to receive your love and adoration. But just as the most blessed Virgin had her divine Son's life, and His holy examples, and actions, and words going on before her eyes, to her inconceivable advancement in grace and spiritual progress, even so we have her Son's life and example going on before *our* eyes, in all their stages, which we can study to our immense profit and advancement in grace. Let us now study her Son's blessed life and divine example with her eyes, so to speak, just as she used to look at it; only we are looking at it *now,* not in the past, but in the present, here in the Blessed Sacrament.

First, as to the holy infancy, which is all more or less a hidden life. The counterpart of this stage of the earthly life of Jesus is very evident in the Blessed Sacrament. The angel announced to Mary that she was chosen to become the Mother of God. She spoke the words, *"Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum"*—"Be it unto me according to thy word," and the Son of God became incarnate in her womb. The priest at the altar speaks the words, *"Hoc est enim corpus meum"*—"For this is My body," and the Son of God and of Mary is incarnate in his hands (not *becomes* incarnate, indeed, for He is so already). For nine months He was hidden from all the world except from His holy Mother, being yet unborn. She alone knew and conversed with Him, save when she visited St. Elizabeth, who, with her son, also yet unborn, recognized the invisible presence of the Son of God and of Mary. So, in the tabernacle, Our Lord is hidden from the eyes of all the world under the impenetrable veil of the sacred species, revealing Himself in love and faith only to those who believe, best known and most perfectly revealed to those who are holiest and purest. In His nativity He was given into the hands of His creatures; in the Blessed Sacrament He is given into our hands in holy communion; and He is sometimes laid in the hearts of those who are unworthy to receive Him, even as He was laid in a stable and manger of brute beasts. His blessed Mother presented Him in the Temple to God His Father for our salvation; so the sacred Host is elevated on high in the Mass and offered to the Eternal Father. His flight into Egypt from the face of Herod has often been repeated when the Blessed Sacrament has had to be carried away to preserve it from the profanation of heretics and pagans. As Our Lord when a child dwelt for

a time in Egypt among a pagan population who knew not God, so in the Blessed Sacrament He dwells in heathen lands and in Protestant countries, dispensing His graces in secret, and drawing poor ignorant hearts to His fold. In Nazareth He lived for many years a hidden life of prayer, silence, obedience, mortification of the senses; so in His hidden life in the tabernacle He teaches the same life of prayer, silence, and obedience; for there we behold Him hidden from men, as at Nazareth, leading a life of prayer, for the Heart of Jesus in the Host is continually active, making infinitely sublime acts of adoration to God His Father, and intercession for us of infinite value. We behold Him there in profound silence. We learn from Him self-denial; for there He continually refrains His senses, granting them nothing on this earth. He teaches us obedience; for He is absolutely obedient to His creatures, the priests, as He was to Mary and Joseph; they place Him in the tabernacle, He remains in the tabernacle; they place Him upon the altar, He remains on the altar. He teaches humility; for He humbles Himself to the depth of remaining under the poor elements, under the humble accidents of bread, so that He seems to those who know Him not to be an inanimate creature, not the Lord of heaven and earth. Such also was the life He led at Nazareth, where the neighbors knew Him not as the Son of God, but as a poor lad, the son of Joseph the carpenter.

Then we come to Our Lord's public life on earth. We read how He went about doing good. He taught from place to place. He cured the sick, and cast out devils. He preached to thousands of persons. He journeyed from place to place to heal the souls and bodies of men. There is nothing like this

to be found in the Blessed Sacrament, is there? O yes! The life of our dear Lord in the divine Host is most active. He remains still in the tabernacle, it is true; but thousands of persons come to visit Him, to be cured of the diseases of their souls. Graces are flying forth from His Heart in inconceivable abundance. Sinners are struck with contrition. A poor, sad-hearted child comes in and kneels by the door. The Lord in the Sacrament sends forth His power, He casts forth the seven devils from her heart, she seeks the confessional, washes the feet of Jesus with her tears, and goes forth from before the tabernacle, another Mary Magdalen. A grief-stricken mother weeps for her son, who is dead in sin. The Lord in the Sacrament, being moved with compassion, says to her, "Weep not." He stretches forth His hand, and raises the youth from the death of sin and restores him to life. A mission is going on in a church; a thousand people and more are present; the preacher speaks from the pulpit, the Lord in the tabernacle sends forth His light and His grace; power has gone forth from Him, and the hearts of the people are touched, and hundreds are converted. It was Our Lord preaching from the tabernacle; the preacher in the pulpit was His instrument. Do you not see how like it is now to the time when He did all these same things in Galilee and Judea? From the tabernacle Our Lord works miracles, both on souls and bodies. He goes forth, in the hands of His priesthood, and visits the sick. He cures the lepers, by cleansing from sin. He gives sight to the blind, by opening the eyes of unbelievers to the truths of faith. In holy communion He renews the miracle of feeding five thousand with five loaves; for He gives Himself wholly and entirely to each one of thousands, nor does He multiply

Himself, nor does He become diminished. We read a beautiful story in the Gospels, how one stormy night He stood on the shore of the sea of Galilee, and watched His disciples in the ship laboring at the oars, for the wind was contrary; and pitying their tribulation He came to them walking upon the sea. Even so He watches us from the shore of eternity, from the throne of His glory, as we labor and struggle through the night of this mortal life upon the rough sea of this world; and He comes to us in the Blessed Sacrament, walking upon the waters of this mortal, earthly life in a mysterious, miraculous manner, as not of it. And as He entered into their ship, and immediately they found themselves at the land, so He enters into the ship of His Church, staying with us in the tabernacle, or giving Himself to us in holy communion, bringing us safe to the land whither we are going, that is, heaven. He chose twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples, and sent them forth to teach and to preach; He chose also the holy women who followed Him, and ministered to Him, and stood under the cross. So He chooses men for Bishops and priests, and sends them out to teach and preach; and he chooses Religious, who should help Him, and have part in His labors and sufferings, and teach His little ones; and He chooses you, also, who read this, to follow Him as His disciple, and to accomplish His designs in your regard, and obey His holy inspirations, and do all His will. Is it not true that Our Lord is accomplishing a public ministry in the Blessed Sacrament now, even more than on the shores of the sea of Galilee? This is only a sketch. But in reading the Gospels you may see many more parallels.

We find also a counterpart of the Passion and death of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. He

was rejected by the Jews; so He is rejected now by heretics and infidels. He was seized, dragged from one unjust judge to another, buffeted, spat upon, beaten, blindfolded and mocked. So He is treated now in the Blessed Sacrament, by the hatred shown to Him by many men, by the writings and speeches of infidels, by the haters of religion, who in some countries would close the churches, drive Our Lord from the tabernacle, and turn out priests and Religious. So, also, He is treated in holy communion by bad Catholics, and by cold and indifferent hearts. The Blessed Margaret Mary had some terrible visions about the communions of proud and indifferent souls; how displeasing they were to Him, how much pain they gave Him, how in their communions they dragged Him, as it were, through thorns and briars. But when the soul is one with Our Lord in humility and fervor, then her holy communion is a most pleasing and acceptable act in the eyes of His heavenly Father, and of great fruit to the recipient. For she puts few or no obstacles in the way of the graces and blessings which flow out from the Heart of Jesus.

As for the glorious life of Our Lord, which He led after the Resurrection, and is leading since, and will forevermore, that is the very life that He is actually leading in the Blessed Sacrament. The life He leads here with us in the tabernacle is His glorious and risen life.

He is with us in the Blessed Sacrament as a consequence of the Resurrection and Ascension; and His sacramental presence is a constant reminder of those happy mysteries. He is in the same actual state now, in the tabernacle, that He was in on the morning of the Resurrection, and when He was parted from His apostles on His Ascension day. He comes to us from the glory of heaven, fresh from the

bosom of His Father, full of beauty, blessedness, and joy, full of the new wine of His Father's love, crowned and sceptered, and Sovereign of the kingdom of God, and desiring to confer all this blessedness, glory, and royalty on all who will open their hearts to Him. Blessed are we who have Him with us night and day! In Him we have all we want; for in the Holy Eucharist He gives us all He ever was, and is, and is to be. "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see; for I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them" (Luke x. 23).

With Father Faber let us exclaim: "All blessing be to Thee, Most Holy Sacrament! for that Thou art God, and for that Thou art man, and for that in love of us Thou art so lovingly and humbly veiled, and yet withal so indubitably distinct and clear.

"O King of angels! Who can tell Thy worth? The angels round Thy tabernacle know how far too short eternity will prove to exhaust the hymns that should enumerate the wonders of Thy Sacrament of love!"

Let us turn our thoughts now to the

Holy Sacrifice of the Altar,

and in particular to the priest who offers the Mass. This is the greatest devotion, the greatest act of worship we are ever, or can ever be engaged in—the holy sacrifice of the Mass. It is the sacrifice of the cross re-enacted and continued day by day, and the Lord's Passion and death daily represented. It is the same sacrifice, differing only in the manner of its offering. It is the reconciliation of man to God, the sacrifice most pleasing to the Father. and the

source from which all good things come to us individually. By the Passion of Our Lord, heaven was opened, sin blotted out, and graces obtained for *the whole human race;* in the sacrifice of the Mass all this is applied to *each one individually.*

Our Lord came among us, and reconciled us to His Father, "making peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). He was pleased to be partaker of our blood, in order that He might shed that blood for us (Heb. ii. 14). But not content, in the depth of His love for us, with His actual sufferings and death upon the cross He wished to continue this sacrifice by the hands of His priests, even to the end of the world. Accordingly, in instituting the sacrifice of the altar, He said: "This is the chalice of the New Testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you," thus pointing out that He instituted it in relation to and as a continuation of the sacrifice of the cross wherein He shed His blood. In the holy Mass is renewed, mystically, the shedding of that same blood, "which speaketh better than that of Abel," as the Apostle says, because it crieth not for vengeance but for mercy. Not that His blood is shed again in the Mass actually, but it is *mystically* done; that is, the separation of the blood from the body is represented by the separate consecration of the Host and the chalice; yet there is actually and in truth offered to the Eternal Father that same precious blood that was formerly shed in the Passion, but which now is forever united to His body in His glorified state in heaven, and in His sacramental state in the Blessed Eucharist.

The Passion of Our Lord, then, is vividly represented before our eyes in the sacrifice of the Mass. There is, first, that essential representation just spoken of, where the blood of Our Lord is repre-

sented as separated from His body by the separate consecration of the Host and chalice. Secondly, the whole ceremony of the Mass, from beginning to end, is a representation of Our Lord undergoing His Incarnation, Passion and death. The priest himself who offers the sacrifice is a living representation of Jesus Christ. Or rather, the priest, in his own person, is a *representative* of Jesus, while in his office of priesthood, he *is* Jesus. How is that? Because he goes to the altar to perform a divine act which Jesus alone can do of Himself, because He is God, and which is the *own work* of Jesus, and not the work of man. The personality of the priest is, in the mind of God, and should be also in his own mind, altogether absorbed in the person of Jesus Christ; so that the visible priest who is seen at the altar is, as it were, but the veil which hides from sight the divine and eternal Priest, Jesus Christ Himself. There are not many priesthoods—there is but one priesthood, the priesthood of Jesus Christ; there is but one priestly power; there is but one infinite force in certain words, which are called the words of consecration; and this infinite force and these almighty words are the power and the words of the divine Priest, Christ our Lord. Therefore, every priest is a priest because he is invested, not with a priesthood of his own, but with the priesthood of Jesus Christ. It is most important for us to get this truth strongly and vividly into our minds, so that Jesus in His priesthood on earth, in His priests, may be a living reality to us; so that when we see the priest coming out and standing at the altar, we may not think of him as Father Brown, or Father Smith, may not think of his human personality, which is naught, and may forget his ways or peculiarities, or anything which stamps him a mere man; but we should see in him, with a living

faith, only Jesus Christ. Hence, it is the divine and eternal priesthood of Jesus that is really and absolutely there; for if it were not there, there would be no priest—only a mere man, powerless and useless. Oh, how necessary is faith! Pray for a living faith, which looks beyond the appearance; which penetrates eternal truths; which sees that the one real and great thing on earth is Jesus, and His priesthood, which is one with Himself. In heaven, says one of the Fathers, the sacerdotal character in individual priests will no longer be hidden, but all eyes will see its identity with the priesthood of Christ. For between Jesus and the priest, on the ground of the eternal priesthood, there *is* identity. Jesus and the priest are one on that ground. The priesthood that we have is the priesthood of Jesus, which the Eternal Father conferred upon Him, when He said to Him: "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech," and this everlasting priesthood He confers upon men, and shares with men. In this way the priest is united with Jesus our Lord as nobody else can be united. It resembles somewhat the relations between Our Lord and His most blessed Mother. How much grace a priest has by all this! He has sanctity itself in his hands by the very possession of the eternal priesthood, if he only wills it. The priest, if he wills it, can love Our Lord with a love that is peculiarly the privilege of the priest, and such as no one else on earth can have; a love that may be compared, in its character, to the love of the holy Virgin for the Child Jesus; so that a devout and holy priest may, in a certain sense, share in the love of Mary for Our Lord, as their relations to Him are so much alike. How are they alike? She brought Him forth in the world, and the priest brings Him down from heaven on the altar;

she nursed Him and cared for Him on earth, and the priest cares for Him and guards Him in the sacred Host—for no one may touch the Host but the priest, no one may open the tabernacle or care for the Blessed Sacrament but the priest. He belonged to her, He belongs to the priest. He belonged to her that she might give Him to the world—He belongs to the priest that he may give Him to each one that seeks Him. Every priest ought to be a saint. It seems strange that all are not great saints; but, St. Paul says, "We carry a heavenly treasure in earthen vessels." I say these things that you may have a great idea of the priesthood in the Catholic Church, for it is the priesthood of Our Lord, no matter who the priest may be who possesses it. Even if he be not a good man, yet it is as a *man* that he is bad—as a priest he possesses, carries in himself the holy and divine priesthood of Christ Our Lord.

When the priest comes forth to the altar, take no thought of who he is, or what he is by nature; but fervently desire of Our Lord that he may have the grace to say the Mass with the same heavenly dispositions with which *Our Lord* is about to offer Himself by his hands in the Mass, and with which He once offered Himself with His own hands in that first Mass—after the Last Supper, on Maundy Thursday. Pray very earnestly that the priest may make Our Lord's interests his own interests, and that he may place no obstacle in the way of the outflow of grace from the Holy Sacrifice by having any worldly and wandering thoughts, but may be totally taken up, in his mind and will, with the great act he is about to perform. For although it is true that a Mass offered in a careless and distracted manner, or by a priest with a worldly heart, or even in mortal

sin, is not only valid, but, as St. Thomas says, is not without its fruit, on account of the divine Victim offered and the prayers of the Church of God; yet, on the other hand, if the priest is united to Our Lord in his heart, and absorbed in Him, a devout and fervent priest, his Mass has many special fruits and sensible graces of which the other is deprived. So, then, in uniting yourself to the priest in the Mass, do so with the desire that he say it as Our Lord desires him to say it, and as Our Lord Himself would say it if He were standing visibly in his place; and then, through the priest, unite yourself to Jesus the one High Priest, and endeavor to be absorbed in Him during the Sacrifice, as the priest himself should be absorbed. For He is offering Himself to His Father in the Mass, and praying for His glory and His designs in us. As David says of Him in the twenty-first Psalm: "To Thee is My praise in the great assembly: I will pay My vows in the sight of them that fear Him."

In assisting at the holy sacrifice of the altar, keep in view the four ends of sacrifice, and pay your fourfold debt to the Lord, namely: Adoration, Thanksgiving, Reparation, and Prayer. You should assist at holy Mass with great love in your heart for Our Lord, in union with that great love with which He came down from heaven, suffered and died and rose again for us, and with which He is now offering Himself in the Mass. You should hear it in union with the love with which the heart of the most blessed Virgin was filled at His Incarnation, at His nativity, during His hidden life, during the years of His public teaching and miracles, during His Passion, and while she stood under the cross and saw Him die; in union also with the love wherewith she was filled at His Resurrection, and Ascension into

heaven; striving to enter, as it were, into her sentiments, and to love Him with her heart, and to study Him in these sacred mysteries as represented in the Mass, with her eyes. You should earnestly desire the glory of God, and wish to praise the Most Blessed Trinity in union with the adorable Heart of Jesus, in union with the blessed Virgin Mary, in union with all the saints and citizens of the heavenly court. You should also desire to give glory and honor to the sacred humanity of Christ, and increase of joy and glory to the angels and saints. Assist also with a grateful heart; giving thanks to God the Father for giving us His Son, making Him our Brother and giving us all good things along with Him; and for His blessed Passion and death; rejoicing in the infinite glory and joy with which His Divine Heart is now inundated. Give thanks also for all the graces and conversions granted to so many thousands every day, and then for all the thousand graces and favors granted to yourselves; for it is a very just and wholesome thing, as the holy Church says, for us to give thanks to the Lord our God for all that we have received; yes, and sometimes to go over the list of them; and we will always be discovering mercies and favors we had never noticed before.

It seems to me that we ought to have a special love for the holy Mass, because it is the mystery Our Lord Himself loves the best of all—it is His favorite work.

He offers Himself in it to His Father with great and inexpressible love. No words can express all that the holy Mass is and all that it does. By it the world is kept from destruction; for the Eternal Father beholds His Son humbling Himself in the hands of His priesthood on every altar throughout

the world, and His wrath is appeased. By it the hands of the servants of God are strengthened in their constant battle against the devil and the world; by it the words of His preachers receive their fruit, souls are converted from sin, and infidels to the faith. By it the hearts of His children are kept up, and their courage inflamed to suffer with Him and bear and do all things for Him. By it, all Our Lord's holy intentions and designs for souls, and plans (if we may speak so) for the salvation of sinners, receive their beginning and accomplishment. By it the wickedness of Satan is restrained, and sins are kept from being committed, and the consummation of all things hastened. By it, in fine, come numberless graces to each individual soul; but particularly to those who understand and love the Mass as they ought. With what love, then, with what recollection, should you not hear Mass, you whom Our Lord calls not merely to do exterior work for Him, but also to be united to Him and to pray for His holy interests, making His interests your interests, and His intentions your intentions! So, in the holy Mass, strive to be absorbed in Our Lord by love, praying for the accomplishment of His interests and designs, praying for His glory all the world over, for His intentions in regard to Religious Orders, Communities, souls; for the spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart, the precious blood, and the Rosary; praying that He may become better and better known in the holy Mass and in the tabernacle. And for this last above all, you should pray, since in so many places devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is increasing, and it seems to be the special need of this age. Do not think you have nothing to do with all these things as if they were above you. Our Lord deigns to have need of you and of your fervent prayers in the Mass,

and He makes the accomplishment of some of His wishes and designs depend on you. And not only should you pray in this Holy Sacrifice for these interests of Our Lord, but also offer yourselves up for their accomplishment, as living and willing victims along with the divine Victim in the holy Mass.

Cardinal Newman, referring to the sublimity of the Holy Sacrifice, writes in *Loss and Gain:* "I declare, to me nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming, as the Mass. I could attend Masses forever and not be tired. It is not a mere form of words. *It is a great action,* the greatest action that can be on earth. It is not the invocation merely, but, if I dare use the word, the *evocation* of the Eternal. He becomes present on the altar in flesh and blood, before whom angels bow and devils tremble. That is the awful event which is the scope and is the interpretation of every part of the solemnity. Words are necessary, but as means, not as ends; they are not mere addresses to the throne of grace, they are instruments of what is far higher, of consecration, of sacrifice. They hurry on, as if impatient to fulfil their mission. Quickly they go—the whole is quick; for they are all parts of one integral action. . . . So we, all around, each in his place, looking out for the great Advent, 'waiting for the moving of the water,' each in his place, with his own wants, with his own thoughts, with his own intention, with his own prayers, separate but concordant, watching what is going on, watching its progress, uniting in its consummation. . . . There are little children there, and old men, and simple laborers, and students in seminaries, priests preparing for Mass, priests making their thanksgiving; there are innocent maidens and penitent sinners; but out of these many minds rises one Eucharistic hymn, and the great *action* is the measure and the scope of it."

That ardent lover of the Blessed Sacrament, St. Alphonsus Liguori, writes: "All the honors which *angels,* by their homages, and *men,* by their virtues, penances, mortifications, and other holy works, have ever given to God, do not weigh as much as the glory given to the Lord of heaven and earth by a single Mass."

Our final consideration in this chapter is the subject of

Daily Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The following reflections on this point are culled from a very instructive and interesting paper read at the Third Eucharistic Congress by Father John J. Frawley, C.SS.R.

Who of us has not heard of the touching incident related of a French soldier in Orleans? He was wont to spend at least an hour every day in church before the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. When asked by his captain what he was doing there, he gave an answer worthy of a saint: "I stand sentinel before the throne of God. It grieved me to see that the President has four sentinels to keep guard, the general two, and God none. I will therefore perform this service at least for an hour." In this noble reply and still nobler action are pictured and portrayed the natural logic of the Catholic soul throbbing with lively faith in the real presence and with burning love for the divine Prisoner, the mystic attraction of the Catholic heart for Jesus, the Friend of friends and the Magnet of souls hidden behind the sacramental veils.

A visit to the Blessed Sacrament—what is it, what does it mean? Listen to the thrilling description given by the illustrious Cardinal Wiseman:* "The familiar expression, 'a visit to the Blessed Sacra-

**Essays on Various Subjects,* vol. 2, p. 264.

ment,' so well understood in Catholic countries and Catholic communities, contains a depth of faith and of love which long descriptions would not so adequately convey. It declares at once the simple, hearty, practical belief in the real presence; not a vague, surmising opinion, not an uncertain hope that the Lord of glory may be there; but a plain conviction that, as surely as a king dwells in his palace, and may be there found by those who are privileged to enter in; or rather, that as certainly as He Himself dwelt once in a stable, making it His first palace upon earth, and was there 'visited' by kings from a distance, and by shepherds from the neighborhood; that as truly as He abode in the houses of His friends, and was 'visited' by Nicodemus for instruction, or by Magdalen for pardon; so really does He now dwell among us in such sort as that we may similarly come before Him and have recourse to Him in our wants. Nothing short of the liveliest faith in the mystery could have introduced, or could keep up, this practice. But the term is likewise the offspring and expression of love. It implies a certain intimacy, if one may use so homely a term, with Him to whom it is applied. It gets us beyond the dark regions of awe into those of glowing affection; it raises us up above the crouching attitude of Israel's children at the mountain's base; nay, carries us straight through the clouds and lightnings at its side, to the silent, radiant summit, where God and man meet face to face, and discourse together as friends are wont to do."

And a daily visit means the daily approaching and abiding before the God of the tabernacle and the tabernacle of God, the daily scaling and mounting of the silent, radiant summit, where we meet God face to face and converse with Him as our Teacher, Shep-

herd, Friend, Brother, Spouse, in unrestrained familiarity; the daily reposing upon the Heart of Jesus and speaking with Him heart to heart, the daily adoration of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—in imitation of the shining hosts of the Church triumphant in heaven—"the daily worship of the adorable Victim on His altar-throne."

Who can better tell us the benefits and blessings of the daily visits than he who is the prince of the apostles of the daily visits, and who himself tasted to the full the unutterable sweetness and heavenly graces of the daily visits, St. Alphonsus Liguori? "Certainly," he exclaims, "among all devotions, after the receiving of the sacraments, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament holds the first place, is the most pleasing to God, and the most useful to ourselves. . . . You must be aware that in a quarter of an hour spent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, you will perhaps gain more than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day. . . . Jesus dispenses His graces in greater abundance to those who visit Him in the Most High Sacrament. Blessed Henry Suso used also to say that Jesus Christ hears the prayers of the faithful more graciously in the Sacrament of the Altar than elsewhere. And where indeed did holy souls make their most beautiful resolutions but prostrate before the Most Holy Sacrament? Who knows but that you also may one day, in the presence of the tabernacle, make the resolution to give yourself entirely to God? . . . I repeat it that indeed you will be blessed, not only in eternity, but even in this life. . . . Be assured that Jesus Christ finds means to comfort a soul that remains with a recollected spirit before the Most Blessed Sacrament far beyond what the world can do with all its feasts and pleasures. Oh, how sweet a joy it

is to remain with faith and tender devotion before an altar and converse familiarly with Jesus Christ, who is there for the express purpose of listening to and graciously hearing those who pray to Him; to ask His pardon for the displeasures which we have caused Him; to represent our wants to Him as a friend does to a friend in whom he places all his confidence; to ask Him for His graces, for His love, and for His kingdom; but, above all, oh, what a heaven it is there to remain making acts of love towards that Lord who is on the very altar praying to the Eternal Father for us, and is there burning with love for us. Indeed, that love it is which detains Him there, thus hidden and unknown, even though He is despised by ungrateful souls! But why should we say more? Taste and see."

We must all become like unto Christ. This likeness unto Christ can be acquired only through sacrifice. And where is the life of sacrifice taught but in the school of the Crucified now set up on the altar of God? The most heroic sacrifice of love, the bloody sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, who though sinless died for the sinful, forced the idea of sacrifice into the hearts of men. And from Calvary's heights in shining procession the hosts of noble souls march on through the ages, and for Jesus' sake generously sacrifice their lives for the welfare and salvation of men, inspired by the self-same Saviour who in the Blessed Eucharist accompanied men through the vicissitudes of times and of centuries, and ever renews the torrent of generous self-sacrifice that gushed forth from His Heart through the wound in His side. And the Religious, kneeling immovable at the foot of the altar, with joy indescribable draws the waters of magnanimous self-sacrifice out of the Saviour's fountains (Is. xii. 3).

The Blessed Sacrament is our greatest, our most precious treasure. For it is the same divine Essence that constitutes all the glory of heaven, which is here present in the tabernacle: our paradise on earth. "The Blessed Sacrament," says Father Faber, "'is no less than heaven on earth.' . . . God has thrown Himself, His grace, His joy, His presence into it as the last citadel of His love. Let us build our tents beneath its walls, and abide there evermore: for those portals are the happy end of all human pilgrimage."

It contains all the wealth of God's infinite love and all the priceless merits of His Passion, the gem of gems and the jewel of jewels, the Incarnate God Himself. "Let us not envy the blessed in heaven, since on earth we have the same Lord, with greater wonders of His love," says St. Alphonsus.

It is the most efficacious means of gratitude and thanksgiving to God, the most certain remedy for all our woes, the most abundant source of comfort and consolation in sufferings and sorrows, of help and deliverance in all the needs and afflictions of body and soul for ourselves and all those intrusted to our charge, for sinners and the souls in purgatory, for the Church and the world. Hearken to the inspiring words of Father Faber: "Many a time when a man is wild with the questions, the doubts, the despairs, the uncertainties, the fears with which a view of life has surrounded him, and which are barking and baying at him, like so many dogs, he goes by an instinct of grace to the Blessed Sacrament, and in a moment, without effort on his part, all these shrill voices are silent. His Lord is with him, the waves are still, the storm is abated, and, not after further voyage, but straightway, he is at the haven where he would be. One look at the face of Jesus and the clouds fall

away, and there is light. . . . The Blessed Sacrament is everything to us. We have our dearest Lord with us, what care we for aught else? Darkness is only pleasant shade when He is nigh. Disquietudes are worth their pains for the extreme sweetness of having His gentle hand to smooth them down. . . . In a word, to have God so given up to us, to be with us and to be ours, as He is in the Blessed Sacrament, is our all in all."

Bourdaloue expresses the same thought thus: "No more than one visit to the Blessed Sacrament is sometimes necessary to change immediately the dispositions of a heart, and to cause the sweetest repose and full content to succeed the greatest trouble and sorrow. Many have approached it languishing and overwhelmed with grief, and have returned replenished with strength, courage, and even alacrity and joy."

In regard to the manner of making the daily visit, Father Faber aptly remarks: "The ways of visiting the Blessed Sacrament must be as various as the souls of men. Some love to go there to listen; some to speak; some to confess to Him as if He were their priest; some to examine their consciences as before their judge; some to do homage as to their King; some to study Him as their Doctor and Prophet; some to find shelter as with their Creator. Some rejoice in His Divinity, others in His sacred humanity, others in the mysteries of the season. Some visit Him on different days by His different titles, as God, Father, Brother, Shepherd, Head of the Church, and the like. Some visit to adore, some to intercede, some to petition, some to return thanks, some to get consolation; but all visit Him to love." Love, enkindled by a lively faith, will contrive a thousand devices, and will always find abundant matter for

prayer and conversation with the Eucharistic Saviour. A certain devout soul, on being asked how she employed the many hours passed in visiting the Blessed Sacrament, replied in utter astonishment: "Good God, am I asked what I do in His presence? Rather what is not done there? We love, we ask, we praise, we give thanks! What does a poor man do in the presence of one who is rich? What does a sick man do in the presence of his physician? What does a man do who is parched with thirst in the presence of a limpid fountain? What is the occupation of one who is starving, and is placed before a well-charged table?" (St. Alphonsus, *First Visit.*)

But, as in meditation, so also for the visit it is advisable to have some method. Various methods have been suggested. The renowned ascetical writer, Father Louis de Ponte, S.J., recommends the application of the interior senses to the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament according to the method of St. Ignatius. With the eyes of the soul we are to contemplate His divine majesty and all the stupendous miracles and infinite treasures contained in this august mystery—stimulating ourselves to acts of adoration, homage, love, petition, thanksgiving. With the ears of our soul we are to listen to His loving invitations and holy inspirations and the salutary lessons He teaches—exclaiming with the Psalmist: "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me" (Ps. lxxxiv. 9). With the interior palate of our soul we are to taste the sweetness of this true Manna, of this heavenly Bread, in spiritual communion. With the interior touch of the soul we are to embrace His sacred wounds and reverently kiss them, lovingly approach His Sacred Heart, touch the hem of His garment, and with lively faith beg Him to touch and heal us.

Father Eymard suggests a division of the time of the visit, devoting it successively to acts of adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, and supplication. These are the four ends for which sacrifice is offered to God, and the homage we render to our sacramental God is to be a sacrifice of our hearts. This method has been followed by his sons and disciples, the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament.

The method of St. Alphonsus begins with a preparatory prayer in which he offers the visit for three ends: To thank our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament for this great gift, to make amends to Him for the outrages perpetrated against Him in this mystery of love, and to adore Him in all the tabernacles on earth, but especially as an act of humble compensation in those in which He is the least revered and the most abandoned. This beautiful prayer has been indulgenced by the Sovereign Pontiff. Then follow texts from Holy Scripture with devout reflections, edifying sayings and examples of saints and holy men, quotations from the Fathers and spiritual writers, fervent affections and aspirations, humble petitions and supplications, varying for each day in the month. Into these the saint poured out the fire of love which consumed his own heart. These holy sentiments and fervent prayers, coming from so noble a source, must appeal to the piety of every devout lover of the sacramental Jesus. At the end of each visit the spiritual communion so highly recommended by St. Alphonsus and other masters of the spiritual life, is to be made, which consists in an ardent desire to receive Our Lord sacramentally and in lovingly embracing Him as if we had actually received Him. Before bidding adieu to Our Lord, a short visit to our blessed Lady for every day in the month is added together with a concluding prayer to

implore her powerful patronage: "Most holy, immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary," which prayer has been indulgenced by the Holy See, and is one of the most beautiful prayers in honor of Our Lady that ever fell from the pen of man. It was the practice of St. Alphonsus never to separate devotion to Mary from the love of Jesus, saying that as Mary was continually associated with her divine Son in the work of our Redemption, so she should also be associated with Him in our devotions, and lead us to Him by her intercession.

Whatever method we employ, the visit should abound in acts of reparation and petition. The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is practically identified with the devotion to the Sacred Heart. This latter devotion promotes frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and is in turn nourished by them; and therefore our daily visits will become most pleasing to the Sacred Heart, and profitable to ourselves, if they are made with the express intention to spend in reparation some time with Him who remains for us day and night on our altars, and is so frequently left alone and abandoned.

"Be assured," writes St. Alphonsus, "that the time you will spend with devotion before the most divine Sacrament will be the most profitable to you in life, and the source of your greatest consolation in death and in eternity."

There is no doubt that the greatest consolation at the hour of death for the lover of the Blessed Sacrament will be the remembrance of the frequent conversations he has had with his hidden God. How often in life did he not love to repeat the sublime words of the immortal hymn of St. Thomas Aquinas:

"Humbly I adore Thee, hidden Deity,
Which beneath these symbols art concealed from me;
Wholly in submission Thee my spirit hails,
For in contemplating Thee it wholly fails."

That must indeed have been a beautiful and touching scene in the sick-chamber of one of the noblest of the American hierarchy, that strong and sturdy character, Archbishop Bailey. Just previous to his death, in speaking to a warm personal friend, the celebrated theologian, Father Konings, C.SS.R., he uttered words which revealed the deep and tender devotion of his beautiful soul to the Eucharistic God: "Do you see that lamp burning there in the sanctuary? I want my bed so placed that I can keep that light constantly in sight!" For that light reminded him of his best and dearest Friend. That light reminded him of the lamp of faith that lit up his erring footsteps wandering about as he was outside the bark of Peter, and brought him safe to the door of the tabernacle. Often had he gone there to offer his heartfelt gratitude to the Giver of all good gifts for this greatest gift of faith, that made him the child of the Eucharist, and taught him to know and love his Eucharistic God. In the sorrows of life he had always found Him his true consoler and counselor. Now that he was about to be called home, for he felt that the hand of death was on him, he sincerely hoped and earnestly prayed that he should soon see Him as He really is, face to face.

The good and great Archbishop could well say in the concluding verse of that wonderful prayer of St. Thomas, and may our lips, at the last moment preceding eternity, pronounce the same words:

"Jesus, whom in this life veiled I behold,
Grant what my soul thirsts for with desire untold;
O may I, beholding Thine unveiled grace,
Rest in blissful vision of Thine open face. Amen."

CHAPTER LIV.

Emmanuel.

IN *The Following of Christ,* Book IV., ch. 1, par. 9, we read: "Many run to sundry places to visit the relics of the saints, and wonder to hear of their remarkable deeds; they behold the spacious buildings of their churches, and kiss their sacred bones, enveloped in silk and gold. And behold, Thou art here present to me on the altar, my God, the Saint of saints, the Creator of men, and the Lord of angels.

"Oftentimes, in seeing those things, men are moved with curiosity and the novelty of sights, and carry home but little fruit of amendment; and the more so when persons run lightly hither and thither without real contrition. But here in the Sacrament of the altar, Thou art wholly present, my God, the man Christ Jesus, where also is derived, in full copiousness, the fruit of eternal salvation, as often as Thou art worthily and devoutly received.

"To this, indeed, we are not drawn by any levity, curiosity or sensuality, but by a firm faith, a devout hope, and a sincere charity."

Commenting on these words of Thomas à Kempis in a paper read at the Third Eucharistic Congress of the United States, the Rev. Edward McSweeny, D.D., says:

"What the holy author of *The Imitation* remarked is a subject of observation and thought with many. An Italian artist was working silently for months on the great altar-piece of St. Stephen's, New York, and the clergy heard him express surprise that so

many people came in to pray before one or other of the statues, or before the great mission crucifix set up in the sanctuary, and left the church without paying homage to the living God in the tabernacle. They forsake 'the fountain of living water,' as Jeremias complains (ii. 13), seemingly forgetful that the rest are but cisterns filled according to their capacity by the divine Dispenser of grace. Is there not, as a Boston prelate puts it (*Emmanuel*, December, 1899): 'A surfeit of emotional piety and a deficit of intellectual'? Will you 'bring into captivity the understanding' (2 Cor. x. 5) of your fellow-citizens by this manner?

"Is it expedient to have that pretty Sacred Heart statue at one altar and the 'heart all burning' of the 'beautiful Son of God' on another? Why this illumination at the shrine of a saint, and that single flickering, dust-eaten, sometimes dying, alas! mayhap dead, flame, before the Real Presence? Are we priests even always able to find the Blessed Sacrament in this multitude of lamps?

"Honor the saints, love them and invoke them! The words of St. Alphonsus may be used of any of them: 'You can not love the saints too much, provided you love Jesus infinitely more.' Let us priests think of the 'infinitely more.' Let us not be content with sating our senses and imagination, but rouse our souls and those of our people to a 'definite realization of the stupendous fact of the real presence of Jesus Christ on our altars!' There is vastly more suggestion and impressiveness, more inculcation of solid piety in the chapel at Dunwoodie, Overbrook, or Mount St. Mary, with its solitary lamp, than there is in some churches you and I could name. 'Come to *Me*, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you' (Matt. xi. 28).

"A group of priests were conversing one day about the efficacy of prayer to this saint or that. Different ones of the elders spoke of their favorite saints. At last the youngest very modestly remarked to his nearest companion: 'As for me, I go right over there'—pointing to the altar of the Blessed Sacrament! He little thought that his preference would be published for the consideration of the clergy in this assemblage. 'The Master is come and calleth for thee,' O priest! (John xi. 28). Father Dalgairns offers a thought that to some is of great value: We have the right to think that Jesus in this mystery is present with all His senses, that He sees us with His bodily eyes, hears the sweet music of the organ and the children's hymns, and so on. This can not be said of any of the saints, as far as we know, for the Church knows of no real presence of them. All the more reason for accentuating the presence and the worship of the Lord Himself, and coming ourselves and bringing our children to His feet and to His 'everlasting arms' (Deut. xxxiii. 27), which is the aim of the Eucharistic League."

FATHER BERNARD'S PENANCE.

Father Bernard was a good and holy parish priest, who was accustomed to give as a penance in confession a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Naturally the visit should be long or short, according to the age and the occupation of the penitent. Sometimes, however, instead of one, he used to impose two or three, and even more visits.

Every one knew this. So, when any one directed his steps to the church outside of the ordinary time of service, he might expect to meet on his way some

one or other to say to him point-blank: "You are going to perform your penance, aren't you?"

As Father Bernard had charge of a great number of souls, there might be seen at any hour of the day a group of the faithful piously kneeling at the foot of the altar. By long performing this kind of penance, many had acquired the salutary habit of never passing the church without going in for some moments to adore the divine Host of our tabernacles.

One day, impelled by very lawful curiosity, one of the parishioners wished to know why his pastor, unlike other priests, had adopted that invariable manner of acting. He went, consequently, to call upon him, and in the course of conversation, very respectfully put to him the question.

The good rector smiled sweetly: "I shall tell you, my friend," he answered. "But allow me to begin at the beginning. In my father's house were many beautiful pictures, but, contrary to the style of these days, they represented biblical scenes, especially those of the Gospel. There was one that made a deep impression on my youthful mind. It was that of the divine Master curing the sick. Jesus was standing in the center of a large public place. Around Him was gathered a crowd of the afflicted of all ages and of every condition in life—men, women, and children—all imploring their cure. They were eagerly pressing around the divine Saviour, stretching out to Him their supplicating hands, and they looked full of faith and confidence. And Jesus, the good and merciful Jesus, was curing them all.

"The picture was so realistic, so exquisite, that I used to pass hours before it. It charmed, it captivated me. Later on, I felt curious to know which passages of the Gospel had inspired the artist. Let me recall them to you, my dear friend, for the benefit of

your own soul. This same Saviour who for centuries has shown Himself so tender toward the unfortunate still lives among us. His Heart has not changed. His divine power is the same, and human miseries also are the same. Here are the passages of which I am speaking:

"'And running through that whole country, they began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard He was.

"'And whithersoever He entered, into towns or into villages or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment: and as many as touched Him were made whole.'

"And now to come to your question—and, indeed, it is time: Ever since I have been a priest, and, above all, since I have had charge of a parish, a very heavy burden for my weak shoulders, I have constantly said to myself that souls as well as bodies are afflicted with all sorts of infirmities and miseries. In the profound conviction that the Eucharist is the infallible remedy, I say to every one of my penitents after confession: 'For your penance you will make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.' There proceeds from it a virtue which cures all those that approach it. Now, am I not right?"

The good gentleman went away very much edified, declaring that his pastor was a man of God.*

**The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament,* July, 1906.

CHAPTER LV.

The Hour of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

The Method of Adoration by Means of the Four Ends of the Sacrifice.

THE apostle of the Holy Eucharist in the nineteenth century was, preeminently, Père Peter Julian Eymard (1811-1868), the saintly founder of the Religious Congregation called "The Fathers of the Most Blessed Sacrament."

One of the most illustrious members of this society, the Rev. A. Tesnière, has given us a clear idea of the method of adoration according to the so-called four ends, in his book *The Eucharistic Christ,* from which we quote the following passages.

Father Eymard, when replacing in his plan of spiritual life, such as he established it for souls called to serve the Eucharist, prayer by the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament, was constrained to adopt a method which should, above all, favor contemplation, praise, conversation, and union with God. The adoration, in fact, must be made before the Most Holy Sacrament, whether at the foot of the throne of the solemn exposition or before the tabernacle, the burning lamp of which is a sign of the living Christ who inhabits it.

The mere fact of such a presence claims that the adorer, coming forth from out of himself, should fix all the thoughts of his soul on the august person of the God-man shown to him through the transparent veils of the Sacrament. It would seem as

though it would be almost a violation of the highest rules of propriety to be occupied with ourselves rather than with Him, and as though we did not take sufficient account of what His near presence claims from us. However necessary may be the study and the reformation of ourselves, it would seem as though, in presenting Himself so openly before our eyes, the hidden God, who so greatly desires to be known, were soliciting us to study Him, to know Him, to apply ourselves to Him first before descending afterwards into ourselves, assured, as we may well be, that we shall never see as well what we are as after we shall have clearly seen what He is—*"Noverim te, noverim me!"*

But, more than this, desiring that the adorer should unite his prayer with that which, from behind the Eucharistic veil, the real Holy of holies, Jesus, the one sole Pontiff, offers to His Father, and which is only the continuation of His sacrifice—that is to say, of His death, accomplished in the morning on the altar, Father Eymard was obliged to seek for a method which would permit the adorer to appropriate to himself the acts, the homage, the sentiments, the duties, of which the Mass is the solemn and perfect expression. Now, by the Mass, or by His sacrifice, Jesus Christ renders to God four principal species of homage which the Council of Trent defines: adoration, thanksgiving, reparation or propitiation, and prayer. These four species of homage include all the duties of religion—that is to say, a theoretical and practical recognition of all the truths which attach men to God. St. Thomas has defined in the following brief and profound words the religion of man toward God: "Man is linked and bound to God, above all, for these four reasons—namely, on account of His supreme majesty, composed of all His

divine excellences; on account of His past benefits, testimonies of His goodness and of His love; on account of the offenses committed against His holiness, which render him a debtor to His justice; and on account of the possessions which are necessary to him for the future as regards time and eternity, and which he cannot obtain except from His liberal bounty, which is rich in all kinds of possessions."*

Each one of these different species of homage includes the most precious and necessary acts of virtue; they contain all that can be expressed of the recognition of the perfections and of the rights of God; the confession of all the duties, of all the obligations imposed upon man. For, in reality, there is only one prayer which is perfect in all respects—namely, holy Mass; all other prayers are valuable only in proportion to their more or less great union with this personal prayer of Jesus Christ. It is the same with the Christian virtues, which compose, together with the homage of prayer, the religion of man toward God; the only value they possess is in the measure in which they take their origin and are consummated in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. For a Christian there is, therefore, no form of prayer more perfect than the participation in spirit and in truth in the Holy Sacrifice.

But it must be borne in mind that during the time in which Christ preserves the state of an immolated Victim, with which He clothes Himself while offering to His Father His mysterious but real death in the sacrifice of the Mass, the religion which is then expressed, the homage which is then rendered, He

**Homo maxime obligatur Deo propter majestatem ejus, propter beneficia jam accepta, propter offensam et propter beneficia sperata* (1a 2æ q. CXII., a. III., ad. 10).

continues, by the continuation of the said state, to render to His Father. During the whole of every day and every night, in the permanence of this state of Victim beneath the species of bread and wine, He adores the majesty, thanks the goodness, makes reparation to the justice, implores the liberality of God.

This it is which inspired Father Eymard with his method of adoration, called by him *the method of the four ends of the sacrifice*. Placing the adorers in the presence of Jesus, the perfect Adorer, could he ask of them anything more opportune, more suitable, more necessary even, than to unite themselves to the Master of prayer, to the Pontiff in the exercise of His prayer, and to pray like Him, with Him, by Him?

He therefore asks of his disciples to aim primarily, in their adorations, at the production of acts of adoration, of thanksgiving, of reparation, and of prayer; to address them to God the Father, by Jesus Christ, the Mediator and Pontiff; to address them to Jesus Christ Himself, who is God as well as Priest, and the eternal end of all things, at the same time as a Mediator between His Father and men.

But as all these species of homage ought to spring from everything which God has revealed to us respecting His excellences, from all that His bounty has given us, from all that we owe to His justice, from all that we expect from His infinitely bountiful plenitude, Father Eymard teaches his disciples to discover in all truths, all mysteries, in all subjects of meditation, the motives of adoration, of thanksgiving, of reparation and of prayer which they necessarily contain. He teaches them what acts of virtue are inferred by each one of these species of primordial homage in order to be properly rendered, some virtues being more suitable to adoration, others to

thanksgiving, others to reparation, and others, lastly, to prayer. Finally, these motives not being able to be discovered, and these acts to be produced, except by a certain labor of the faculties and of the powers, Father Eymard demands from the intelligence, the heart, and the will their regular cooperation, which is what all the different methods of prayer claim. In this manner the whole of the interior being is seen to be employing itself in successively producing, in union with the Eucharistic Pontiff, the homage of the great and perpetual prayer of this sacrifice.

From the strictly methodical point of view each of these species of homage ought to succeed one another in the order in which the Council of Trent enumerates the ends of the Eucharistical sacrifice: Adoration, Thanksgiving, Reparation, Prayer. Father Eymard even recommends that the hour of adoration (for he asks that the adoration should habitually last an hour) should be divided into four quarters, and that each quarter should in turn be consecrated to rendering to God the four great species of homage. He does not, however, render such an equal partition of time absolutely necessary and obligatory, and if grace gives inspiration any one species of homage may be prolonged beyond the others. But whatever may be the length of time given to each species, the succession of these four thoughts singularly facilitates the exercise of the adoration, even in the case of the most inexperienced. It is then four successive prayers, each of a quarter of an hour's duration, linked together by the unity of the same subject, but varying by means of the four different points of view under which they are made to pass; and each time all the faculties are brought into play in order to derive from them the

diverse motives of the four ends and to produce the acts of virtue proper to each. What could be simpler or easier? The same truth, taken up again and replaced four times under a different aspect: (1) Of the adoration or of the divine excellences reflected in it; (2) of the thanksgiving, and of the features of the divine goodness which it bears, and the benefits it recalls to mind; (3) of the reparation, and of the differences it manifests between what we are and what we ought to be in order to accomplish the duties it reveals to us; (4) of prayer and of the graces which we need in order to fulfil the obligations it imposes on us.

Such is the method of the four ends of the sacrifice. Can we not see that by means of this method of adoration our prayer is made to participate in a wholly special manner in the august prayer of Jesus Christ, and that we unite our own private religion to the public religion of the Holy Sacrifice? That we are consequently placed in very near relations with the Eucharistic Pontiff, and that we honor in a very direct manner His state and His action in the Sacrament? What could be more appropriate to a prayer which is destined to be offered in the presence of the tabernacle, or of the throne of the exposition?

To facilitate the exercise of it, we now proceed to enumerate the acts of the different virtues which may be produced by our different faculties for the purpose of expressing the homage of each one of the four ends of the sacrifice. Certainly we are not bound each time to make acts of all these virtues; we name them all in order that a person may choose among them according as the nature of the subject or the state of his soul and the movement of grace may guide him.

ACTS OF THE FACULTIES AND OF THE VIRTUES IN EACH OF THE FOUR ENDS.

Acts and Virtues of the First End.

Adoration, understood as the first of the ends of the sacrifice, has as its object the recognition of the divine majesty, says St. Thomas, *propter majestatem,* and, as he says elsewhere, that which evidences His excellence above His creatures, the beauty, the perfection, the amiability of God—all that constitutes His infinite being. In relation to us, it is His sovereign rights as First Principle and Supreme End, of Creator and Preserver.

The acts of the mind, in the adoration, are faith in the truth proposed as the subject of adoration, because of the divine word and authority; the supernatural *understanding* of the truth in question; the spiritual *contemplation* of the perfection and the amiability of God which are manifested therein; *admiration; praise.*

The acts of the heart, or of the effective will, are *complaisance, desire, good-will, joy.* The acts of the will, properly so called, are *the gift, the giving up, of ourselves* to the excellences, the perfections, the amiabilities, the rights, the sovereignty of God; and this gift can hardly be manifested except by a kind of *annihilation of ourselves* in the presence of so much greatness, of so much splendor, of rights so lofty, of a majesty so sublime. *Humility, absolute submission, abandonment without reserve, holy fear, religious and profound silence,* are the expressions most suitable for rendering this annihilation of the creature in presence of his Creator whom he adores.

Acts and Virtues of the Second End.

The action of thanksgiving has for its object the gifts, the benefits of God: *propter data,* such as

they are manifested in the truth which we are meditating; consequently its formal object is the goodness and the love of God, proved by His benefits.

The acts of the mind are the following: *Consideration* of the portion exercised by the goodness, the love of God in the proposed truth, by means of the views and the merciful designs revealed in it; *remembrance and enumeration* of the benefits relating to this truth which we have received in our past life, or which we are still receiving every day; the *study* of the value, of the greatness, of the magnificence of these benefits, drawn from the different circumstances which render them more or less costly; *the gratuity of them, the greatness of the Donor, the indigence and the unworthiness of the recipient, the continuation of the gifts,* in spite of abuse or of the small profit derived from them, *admiration, praise.*

The acts of the heart are *grateful love, complaisance and joy, benediction and jubilation, effusions of gratitude and of tenderness, happiness and repose, the silence of beatitude.* These acts issue from the considerations exercised by the mind as enunciated above, the heart following upon the mind at the sight of the divine goodness and the review of His gifts.

The acts of the will are *effective gratitude, testified by protestations of fidelity,* toward a benefactor so magnificent; *humility* or the very humble acceptance of the position of *debtor* and of an *insolvent debtor; resolutions to make use of all of His gifts only for His glory,* to render to Him the fruit of these seeds of His liberality; *promises* to make returns to Him for them; lastly, the gift of ourselves, of all that we have, of all that we are, of all that we

will do, *in testimony of gratitude and as an instalment of our debt.*

Acts and Virtues of the Third End.

Propitiation or reparation has for its object the offenses and the shortcomings to be found in our life in relation to the truth on which we are meditating, and which this meditation discovers to us: *propter offensam.* Reparation first supposes the confession of the fault committed against the holiness of God and the acceptance of the debts contracted toward His justice; then, by prayer, the reentering into favor through His mercy. The formal object of reparation is, therefore, justice to be appeased and holiness to be restored, then the mercy of God to be gained.

Acts of the mind: *The examination or the attentive consideration* of the contrast between our life and the truth proposed to it, either through our formal sins or through our imperfections; *meditation upon the seriousness of the state in question, upon the gravity and the number of our faults; upon the consequences* which such a state and such faults bring with them in regard to God, to Jesus above all; in regard to our responsibilities toward our neighbor; in regard to our vocation in time and our eternal future; and the sincere and humble *confession* of all our sins.

Acts of the heart: They consist chiefly in *saddened love, compunction, a breaking of the heart, contrition;* regret, bitterness, salutary fear, holy sorrow, horror of sin; *compassion, pity for ourselves and the other victims of sin—compassion, above all, for Jesus,* the first, the universal, but the innocent, the gentle Victim of our sins.

Acts of the will: *Detestation and renunciation of*

evil, shunning the occasions leading to it, the rupture of its ties, interior conversion, a firm resolve; satisfaction and the resolution to perform penance; voluntary humiliation, the acceptance of all the pains it may please God to inflict upon us in expiation of our faults; lastly, the *gift of ourselves,* in the humble annihilation of the sinner, to justice that it may satisfy itself here below in regard to us; to mercy that it may have pity on us, have patience and give us new graces; to holiness that it may restore and transform us.

Acts and Virtues of the Fourth End.

Supplication, or prayer, has for its object the gifts, the benefits, and the graces of God to be obtained in the future even as the act of thanksgiving had for its object the giving thanks for benefits already received: *propter beneficia sperata.* It has as its express reason the goodness, the liberality, the plenitude, the providence of God, which it takes upon itself to touch and to render attentive and generous in giving us all the good things necessary to our indigence as being creatures of nothingness. The view of the indigence in question had already appeared during the *reparation,* in the consideration of the shortcomings and faults which disfigure our souls with respect to the truth proposed as a subject; it had already appeared in the contrast between these defects and the divine perfections contemplated in the *adoration,* with the benefits and the gifts set forth in the *act of thanksgiving.*

Acts of the mind: A clear view of our needs; *a consideration* of the exact species of graces we have to seek in order that our soul may profit by all the fruits contained in the proposed truth; the *consideration* of the *riches,* of the *plenitude,* of the

providence of God, which possesses, without impoverishing itself, wherewith to enrich millions of creatures who are nothingness; a *remembrance* of the *promises* whereby God has engaged Himself to give either by way of *facts* or of *guarantees* which show that He will be still more liberal, having already been so in such a magnificent manner.

The acts of the heart consist in *hope, confidence, desires,* which are ardent and lively, animated as they are by the *sentiment* of what we *have already received;* in the *suffering* we experience because of our indigence; in *pity* for ourselves and for others whose needs we know to be identical with ours; in *charity,* disinterested *love* which is *generous, zealous, apostolical,* and makes us desire and earnestly ask what will be either for the glory of God or a benefit for our neighbor.

The acts of the will are *formal prayer* or the *supplication* expressed by the heart or the lips; *repeated, instant, persevering prayer; humble, lowly prayer,* full of *ardor* and also at the same time of *abandonment, willing* what it asks, but still more the good pleasure of the divine will which may prefer, for reasons known to its unfathomable wisdom, to delay instead of immediately granting; to permit the accomplishment of the trial instead of preservation from it; the *resolution to carry out into action,* immediately and very faithfully, the graces which are asked for; the *demand* of the same gifts for *all those who have need of them;* lastly, the *gift of ourselves,* the oblation of our being and of the whole of our life to the good God from whom we expect help in order to repay it, at least in a slight proportion, by means of this offering of small value, although it be all that we can offer of what is best.

In terminating, a look must be cast upon the duties

which will immediately follow upon the adoration: to ask the exact kind of graces which will then be necessary to us, afterwards to implore through Mary and through St. Joseph the blessing of Our Lord.

Read above all the tabernacles these sacred words: *"Ego sum; nolite timere!"* "It is I; fear ye not!" (Matt. xiv. 27.)

Live everywhere, by your heart and your intention, in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament.

Let us place prayer for the interests of holy Church, for the Pope, for Bishops, priests, monks and nuns, in the first place of all our intentions; let us pray, united with the divine, invisible Priest, for the reign, the peace, and the extension of the Church, so that all, Jews and pagans, infidels, heretics, and sinners may come into the Church, and with her adore and glorify her most adorable Spouse and her King in the Sacrament of His love and merciful presence.

As soon as you enter a church, salute Jesus in the tabernacle in these words: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God!" Briefly, then, you can make four acts according to the four ends. (1) Jesus, I adore Thee with the angels and saints; (2) Jesus, I thank Thee for all Thy graces and blessings; (3) Jesus, I am sorry for having offended Thee, because Thou art infinitely good; (4) Jesus, my good God, I love Thee with my whole heart and above all things; I pray Thee to bless me, that, like Thee, I may be meek and humble of heart, and love Thee more and more.

Redouble your visits to the Blessed Sacrament in the time of trial.

At every visit ask for fidelity and perseverance; fidelity to your vows, your Rules and resolutions; fidelity to the duties of your state; in a word, fidelity

to your divine Spouse, so faithful in loving you and bearing with you.

Have recourse to the divine Friend of the tabernacle in every temptation, in every perplexity, in every trouble: to Him before any other friend.

Let us observe strict silence in church and keep it so religiously as not to permit any one to break it in our presence or on our account.

Let us take from the Holy Eucharist examples of the virtues of our state, and let us purify ourselves ceaselessly in honor of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Every day let us renew the promise to serve and honor divine Providence; to do, as Jesus did, the will of the heavenly Father; to be perfectly submissive to all His merciful dispensations. Let us make our morning communion and our daily visits to Jesus in the tabernacle the occasions for generous offerings, the means of a new gift, of an abandonment more and more sincere and perfect to the adorable providence of God.

CHAPTER LVI.

The Relation of Devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Sacrament.

We invite the reader's special attention to the following treatise on the relation of devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Sacrament, which was written by that illustrious son of St. Ignatius, the Rev. William O'Brien Pardow, of New York, and read by him at the Third Eucharistic Congress of the United States. It is a learned, logical, lucid, and forceful discussion of the subject; it is, moreover, devotional and helpful to practical piety. We have read much on the subject, but we have read nothing better than this paper, considering its comparative brevity and compactness.

To be brief, as well as clear, in the development of this beautiful and fertile subject, I shall examine first the essential characteristics of devotion to the Sacred Heart; secondly, the essential characteristics of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; and thirdly, I shall compare these various characteristics, and thus, I trust, bring out in bold relief the relation of the one devotion to the other. Let us begin by looking up a few definitions in our theological storehouses.

I. To understand the exact nature of any devotion we must focus sharply on our mental screen its material object as distinguished from its formal object.

The material object is that particular thing which is proposed for our worship.

The formal object is the reason that moves us to have devotion to the material object.

The material object may be twofold, the primary and the secondary. The primary material object is

the entire person whom the devotion has in view. Honor, as St. Thomas says, is, strictly speaking, shown to the entire being. The secondary material object is something belonging to the person, and honored precisely because belonging to the person.

As the material object may be twofold — the primary and the secondary—so may the formal object be twofold, the general and the special. The general formal object is that general reason which moves us to honor the material object; the special formal object is that particular reason which leads up to the honor paid the material object.

Let me now clothe these dry theological bones with a little flesh, and add some color to the canvas. I suppose, for example, that some friend has just handed me a very valuable present. In thanksgiving for the favor, I raise to my lips the hand of my benefactor. In this case the primary material object of my respect is the man, my friend and benefactor; the secondary material object is his hand, the instrument of his benefaction. The general formal object is my friend's kindheartedness, which prompted the favor; the special formal object is the beautiful present which he has just given me. We would, however, be very far afield in thinking that these theological distinctions are mere scholastic terms and not real and popular truths. The most uneducated man, the least instructed in scholastic doctrines, will affirm, if questioned rightly, that in kissing a priest's hand, for example, he is honoring the priest on account of the dignity of his office, though he has never heard a word about the material or formal object of a devotion. This is human nature. To select another example. We honor a man who has written a great book, but we do not restrict our respect to his soul, the seat of his genius; we

honor the entire man—*totum compositum*—soul and body. The general material object in this case is the author himself; the general formal object, or the reason why we honor him, is his genius; the special formal object is his ability as shown in this particular offspring of his genius.

II. So much for the general principles which underlie all solid devotions. Let us now apply these principles to the two beautiful devotions of which there is question in this paper, the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Sacrament.

The words "Sacred Heart" may be considered in two different ways, first according to their obvious and natural meaning; secondly, according to their metaphorical meaning. In the former way, the "Sacred Heart" means that most noble portion of Our Lord's adorable body which furnished the arteries with their bright stream of blood, conveying life and vigor to all the other parts of the body. Besides having this physiological function, the heart, according to many scientists, is the seat of the sensible affections, and, leaving controverted points aside, taken in its strictly physical sense, it is certainly acted on in some very real and marvelous way by the emotions of the soul, hope, fear, and love. So much for the physical sense.

Taken in the metaphorical sense, the "Sacred Heart" means, and is the symbol of the love of our blessed Lord for all mankind and for each human being in particular. But to be quite exact, we must go further still, for actual Catholic piety by the words "Sacred Heart" understands Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, the God-man, loving us with the most personal and tender of loves. To be convinced of this, we have only to open ordinary books of devotion in which we shall read, *passim*,

that the "Sacred Heart" appeared to Blessed Margaret Mary; the author evidently meaning that Christ, whole and entire, appeared to this devout servant of God. And to settle the question forever, the Church herself uses and authorizes the touching invocation: "Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us," meaning, of course, by this, "O Lord and Saviour, showing us your loving Heart in so tender a way, have mercy on us." Thus, as ever, the *"lex orandi"* is identical with the *"lex credendi."*

Now, as there are two distinct natures in our blessed Saviour, so are there two distinct loves, and the Sacred Heart is the symbol of both loves, the human and the divine, the created and the uncreated.

In referring, however, to the Sacred Heart as the symbol of Christ's love, we must not fancy for a moment that the devotion to the Sacred Heart is merely a symbolical devotion. This would make the beautiful devotion very unreal, and would be very far from the truth. Let me illustrate my meaning by an example. When one reads carefully and prayerfully Chapter XV. of St. John's Gospel, where Our Lord describes so realistically the relation of the vine to the branches, and then says so lovingly, "I am the Vine and you are the branches," one might very easily be led to have a real and tender devotion to our blessed Lord under the symbol of the vine. But in this case, the vine would be a mere symbol. The vine, however truly it represented His love for us, and His intimate union with our souls, could receive none of the adoration paid to Christ. The devotion to Our Lord under the symbol of the vine would be, as far as the vine is concerned, a purely symbolical devotion. But it is altogether different with regard to the Sacred Heart; for that very Heart of flesh, in its place within the sacred body of

Christ, united to the divine Person of the ever Blessed Trinity, is the direct object of our worship, and, unlike the vine just referred to, is itself worthy of all adoration.

Thus far we have examined the material object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart; a word now about its formal object.

The general formal object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart is the infinite dignity and excellence of the divine Person of our blessed Lord; the special formal object is His most ardent love for mankind, and, in a very special manner, His *unrequited* love for mankind, that ardent love for which so very few make Him a return of love. The first reason, therefore, of our devotion to the Sacred Heart is derived from the hypostatic union; for the Heart of Jesus is not to be considered as separated from His humanity, or from the divine Person, as if it were some inanimate object, but it is to be looked upon as intimately united to both. Hence as the Sacred Heart is adored in Christ and with Christ, so the general reason for the adoration of the Sacred Heart is the self-same as the reason for the adoration of the Second Person of the ever Blessed Trinity, become man for our sake. This general reason for adoration is not evidently restricted to the Heart of Jesus, His precious blood, His hands and His feet wounded for us, as the rest of His adorable body are all worthy of adoration by reason of the same hypostatic union.

But there are two very special reasons or special formal objects for the adoration paid to the Sacred Heart, which is therefore adored not only because it belongs to the assumed human nature of Christ, but also because it is His own chosen symbol of His love for mankind, and of His love unrequited. Hap-

pily, we are not obliged to go far to substantiate this part of our thesis. The clear statement concerning this formal object of the devotion is made by Christ Himself. "Behold," said Our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary in the beautiful little chapel at Paray-le-Monial, "Behold the Heart that has so loved mankind as to spare nothing even to exhausting and consuming itself in order to testify to them its love; and in return I receive from the greater part of mankind only ingratitude; by reason of their irreverence and their sacrilege, their coldness and their contempt. . . . For this reason I ask you that the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi be set apart for a special feast to honor My Heart, by communicating on that day and by making reparation to it for all the indignities that it has received."

III. We have thus far glanced at the characteristics of the devotion to the Sacred Heart; let us now apply the same method of study to the Blessed Sacrament.

The general material object in the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself. This is clearly shown in the sublime office which we priests recite on the feast of Corpus Christi: "*Christum Regem adoremus,*" says the *Invitatorium*, "*dominantem gentibus.*" This is the general material object of the devotion and of the feast. The special material object is the body and blood of Christ under the sacramental veils: "*Qui se manducantibus dat spiritus pinguedinem*" continues the *Invitatorium*. This of course refers to the eating of His flesh, as Our Lord Himself says. "*Qui manducat Meam carnem et bibet Meum sanguinem habet vitam æternam.*" Thus the *Invitatorium* of the feast of Corpus Christi contains the

entire *material* object of the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the general and the special.

Now, the general *formal* object of the devotion is the infinite dignity of our blessed Lord and of His sacred body and precious blood in virtue of the hypostatic union.

The special formal object is that the Blessed Sacrament, besides being the real presence, is also a most loving memorial of the Passion of Our Lord and of the Last Supper, when Jesus Christ broke the bread and said: "This is My body which is delivered up for you. Do this for a remembrance of Me;" and taking the chalice He exclaimed: "This is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed unto the remission of sin." *"Qua nocte tradebatur,"* says St. Paul. *"Pridie quam pateretur,"* says the priest offering up the same Holy Sacrifice.

IV. Having now focused our ideas concerning the material and the formal object of both devotions, we are in a position to define clearly the dogmatic and theological relation of the one to the other.

The general material object is the very same in both devotions, *viz.*, the Second Person of the ever Adorable Trinity become man for our sake.

The general formal object is the same in both devotions, *viz.*, the infinite excellence and dignity of Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

This identity of the general material and formal objects in two distinct devotions will not surprise any student of theology. He knows full well that it is by the special material or formal objects that the various devotions of the Church are differentiated. Thus the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is not the devotion to the most precious blood, nor is it the devotion to the five wounds, though the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament honors directly the body of

Christ which contains the precious blood and which was wounded for our iniquities. So the devotion to the Sacred Heart is altogether distinct from the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, because the special material and formal objects are different. As our Most Reverend Archbishop stated so clearly in his letter to the clergy inviting them to this grand Eucharistic Congress: "The Church is ever bringing forth under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost article after article of her majestic creed, and, hand in hand with this development of doctrine, rise solemn and precious devotions among her faithful children."

Once more the *"lex credendi"* and the *"lex orandi"* are in closest union; and the Church, like the faithful steward of the Gospel, *"profert de thesauro suo nova et vetera."* This specialization of the various devotions in the Church, this bringing home to the people, with more realism, the full teaching of the New Testament, has been the loving occupation of the Spouse of Christ ever since the glorious day that beheld the great event of all time and of eternity, *"Et Verbum caro factum est."*

The devotion to the holy name of Jesus, to the five wounds, to the precious blood, to the Sacred Heart, to the Blessed Sacrament, all tend directly to our blessed Saviour in person: "Where the body is, there the eagles are gathered together;" but each of the devotions has a special tone, color, or characteristic of its own. In the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the adorable Heart of Jesus is brought before the faithful in a special way, without any reference to the rest of Our Lord's sacred body. In the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the entire body of Our Lord is proposed for veneration under the sacramental species, without any special reference to His Heart. The devotion to the Sacred Heart, as

Our Lord Himself expressly declares, brings out in bold relief the base ingratitude of men, and leads the faithful into the wide field of reparation, which the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as such does not do.

If from the very night of the Last Supper down to our own day, every single soul that approached the holy table had been all aglow, even with the ardor of the seraphs that surround the throne of God, if every communicant had received our blessed Lord into a tabernacle as well prepared to welcome the divine Guest as was the cenacle itself — *"Cœnaculum grande stratum"*—if every verse of the beautiful psalm, *"Laudate Dominum de cœlis,"* had been a living, breathing reality, from the very night before He died until now: *"Reges terræ et omnes populi; principes et omnes judices terræ juvenes et virgines, senes cum junioribus laudent nomen Domini"*—if all this, I say, had been fully realized in the reverence shown to the hidden God of our tabernacle, the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament would indeed still exist in all its grandeur: *"Quantum potes tantum aude, quia major omni laude, nec laudare sufficis;"* but the devotion to the Sacred Heart understood in all its fulness, as proposed by Christ Himself, would have disappeared; there would be no sacrileges, no ingratitude, no coldness, no indifference to make reparation for.

Again, should the devout communicant confine himself strictly to the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, he might seem to satisfy the claims of the Prisoner on our altars if after holy communion he thanked our divine Saviour with his whole heart for the undeserved favor of His visit, promising undying fidelity, and then left the church with grateful soul to go about his ordinary occupations. But the

devotion to the Sacred Heart tells the devout communicant that he must widen his mental vision until his horizon has become as extended as that of Jesus Christ Himself; the devotion to the Sacred Heart tells the devout communicant that for one who approaches the holy table there are a thousand who keep away, and for one who approaches with the inflamed dispositions that our blessed Lord has a right to expect there are ten thousand who approach with hearts as cold as ice; the devotion to the Sacred Heart tells the devout communicant of the "other sheep," *"alias oves habeo,"* and rouses the soul to do all in its power to bring them, too, to taste and see how sweet the Lord is in the Sacrament of His love. The devotion to the Sacred Heart transforms the devout communicant into an apostle—an apostle of prayer and of action. *"Ignem veni mittere in terram,"* it hears the Heart of Jesus say, *"et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?"* The devotion to the Sacred Heart tells the devout communicant that the King has made a great supper; that the supper indeed is ready, but that the invited guests have refused to come; the devotion to the Sacred Heart sends forth the devout communicant into the highways and byways, with the *"Compelle intrare"* ringing in his ears, and he will not be satisfied until the ardent desire of the King be fully accomplished, "that My house may be filled."

V. We have thus far examined the dogmatic and theological relation of the two devotions; the subject now calls for a few words about what I may describe as their polemic and historical relation.

The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament culminated in the establishment of the glorious feast of Corpus Christi, in the thirteenth century; but any one who witnessed the celebration of this great

solemnity in any city of Catholic Europe—when Europe was Catholic — will hardly believe that this most beautiful and consoling feast met at the outset with the bitterest sort of opposition. In this regard, the relation of the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Sacred Heart is that of identity; both devotions, as expressed in their special feast days, won their way to the place they now occupy in the hearts of the faithful only after a fierce and protracted struggle. In the thirteenth century our blessed Lord deigned to reveal to an unknown Religious of Belgium His will that a special feast should be established in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. Juliana Corneliensis, as she is called in the breviary, for twenty years delayed the execution of Christ's request. At last she spoke. But no sooner was it noised abroad that a new feast was being thought of in honor of the Real Presence than opposition and violent protests arose on all sides. The critics who opposed the new celebration were not Protestants, neither were they unbelievers, but Catholics, well-meaning men, no doubt, *"sed non secundum scientiam."* They had, too, what sounded like good reasons for their criticism. "All novelties in religion," they said, "are dangerous. We are neither more enlightened nor more pious than our forefathers. Why, then, should not what satisfied them for the honor of God and their own sanctification also satisfy us?" "Moreover," they argued, "the proposed festival is useless; it is already celebrated on Holy Thursday; and, besides, is not every day, by the offering of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, a feast of the Blessed Sacrament?" "Furthermore, by calling attention to one day in the year as a feast of the Real Presence, the Church would diminish the devotion of the people to the daily and weekly cele-

bration of the Mass, and besides, this feast of Corpus Christi—the body of Christ—suggests to the mind the flesh alone, which is simply a material object. By the institution of a special feast for the body of Christ, Christ would be divided in the people's worship. Our Lord is whole and entire in the Blessed Sacrament," they said, "and this separation would only beget confusion in the minds of the simple faithful." Thus spoke, nearly seven hundred years ago, some nervous theologians afraid of confusing the minds of the simple faithful; but the minds of the simple faithful are not always so easily confused as the developed intelligence of some theologians, and the great solemnity of Corpus Christi, with its glorious liturgy, its snow-white arches and its clouds of sweet incense, began its triumphal march adown the ages, to the mighty strengthening of the faith and hope and love of all the Church's children. The race of nervous theologians did not die out with the thirteenth century, and we often come across men who in their love for the divine Guest of our altars show signs of fear where there is no cause for fear. The devotion to the Sacred Heart broadens out our theology, and tells us that He who loved to call Himself the "Son of man" has many very dear friends among the sons of men; and that great honors paid to them only emphasize the hold that the Blessed Sacrament had on their lives, according to Our Lord's own words, in St. John's Gospel: "He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me" (John vi. 58).

True, all of us who have had the happiness of kneeling at the grotto of Lourdes might, had we rubbed strenuously our theological spectacles, have counted more lighted tapers and far larger lighted tapers burning there than we had counted in the

magnificent basilica above, around the Blessed Sacrament. This, too, I am sure of, that even without rubbing our spectacles at all, we could easily have counted a far greater number of old sticks and crutches, and of dazzling *exvotos,* in the rustic grotto of the Mother than in the superb palace of her divine Son; and those who have seen some of the miracles of Lourdes know that their place of predilection is the grotto on the banks of the river Gave.

What does all this mean, but that it is the divine King's way of honoring His immaculate Mother? And as the Scripture says: "Thus shall be honored whom the King hath a mind to honor" (Esther vi. 9). The words spoken by Our Lord Himself will ever be verified in His faithful servants and handmaids: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do" (John xiv. 12).

We theologians are apt to forget that many a sinner kneeling at the grotto of our immaculate Mother has been roused by the touching signs of devotion ever manifested there, who else had never had the heart to approach and receive within his breast the King of kings, and Lord of lords, in the great basilica that looks down upon the murmuring waters of the Gave.

True, there may be at times more tapers burning at the shrine of some saint than before the Blessed Sacrament, but we must remember that the lights consuming themselves before the Blessed Sacrament are placed there officially, by the Church, and thus every one of them is aglow with all the Church's faith, and burns with ten thousand candle power. But each of the little tapers burning before some special statue or shrine is put there only by one trembling hand and represents but one individual

soul. The glimmering light may be but too true an image of the flickering faith within the tempted, tortured, or despairing heart of the one who placed it there. Of the God of our tabernacle it was said: "He would not quench the smoking flax." The lights burning before the statue of St. Anthony or of St. Anne, as those that brighten the grotto of Lourdes, have, we may be very sure, led many a soul straight to the Blessed Sacrament. Let us not, therefore, with ill-advised zeal blow out the lighted tapers before the shrine of any of the saints of God, lest in so doing we cause to flicker even the stately sentinel lights, on the great altar, that keep their watch before the King!

VI. Having discussed, however imperfectly, the theological or dogmatic relation between devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Sacrament, having touched on their historical or polemical relation, it remains for me to say a word about what I may call their moral or ascetical relation, and then my pleasing task will be finished.

As Our Lord, appearing to Blessed Margaret Mary, stated that He desired a special day, of His own choice, to be set aside in honor of the Sacred Heart, the Friday after the octave of the Blessed Sacrament, and that on that day He wished the faithful to be urged to make fervent communions of reparation, it is evident that the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament really led up to the devotion to the Sacred Heart; reparation was to be made for the coldness and ingratitude of mankind, especially as shown in their want of love for the Holy Eucharist. So now, in return, the devotion to the Sacred Heart leads many a soul back to the Blessed Sacrament, and paves the way for firm belief in the Real Presence. I explain my meaning.

The objections raised four or five hundred years ago by so-called rationalists against belief in the Real Presence were taken mostly from the nature of matter and of quantity; from the concept of substance and of accident; but these are not the difficulties which keep men away from the holy table nowadays. With the wonderful discoveries of modern and especially recent science staring them in the face, with an electric wire carrying four distinct messages at one and the same time, without confusion or interference; with the astounding properties of radium and radio-active bodies which apparently diffuse energy without diminution of power; with these, I say, and many other equally startling facts on all sides of us, showing what can be done with matter still remaining matter, the thinking men and women of our day can only say: "What do we know about substance or about the essential properties of bodies?" The difficulties against the Blessed Sacrament are not now those of Capharnaum, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" And yet, for all that, so many of the men of our day do not come any nearer to Him, that they may have life and may have it more abundantly. What, then, is the difficulty? The real difficulty in our day is not how can the body of Christ be contained whole and entire in a small particle of what has all the appearances of bread, but it is, how can the Heart of Jesus contain so intense a love for each one of us as to work such wonders in our behalf? The obstacle then is to be found in the difficulty of realizing the ardent, personal love of Our Lord and Saviour for each and every human being. The stumbling-block is no longer in the cenacle, where our blessed Lord took into His holy hand the bread, and said: This is My body; but the stumbling-block

is in the cave of Bethlehem, where the second Person of the Blessed Trinity took to Himself, from a human Mother, the flesh of our flesh and the bone of our bone. It is the Incarnation that staggers, not the Last Supper. Let the men and women of our day once admit the Incarnation, with all its personal love, and the Real Presence follows as clearly as the light of the noon-day sun follows the dawn-light that glimmers in the eastern sky.

Our gloriously reigning Pontiff, who has taken so lively an interest in this great Eucharistic Congress of the United States, who, in his ardent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, has insisted that at the holy sacrifice of the Mass the attention of our people shall be centered in the Real Presence at the altar, and not in the organ loft; who has decreed that church music shall ever be prayer and not a concert, Pius X., I say, gave to the world the keynote of his reign, when, on his accession to the Pontifical throne, he declared that it would be the aim of all his prayers and all his labors, *"Restaurare omnia in Christo."* Now, to bring back the world to Christ, we must preach in season and out of season, what the devotion to the Sacred Heart insists on so much—His personal love for every member of the human race. Useless for the poor repentant sinner to give as an excuse for not approaching the holy table and receiving the precious body and blood of Jesus Christ, that, even with all his sorrow for sin, he is still so unworthy; the devotion to the Sacred Heart is right by his side to encourage him and to say: "You do not receive communion because you are worthy; but because our blessed Lord loves you so much as to have become man for your sake; He begs of you to come to Him at the holy table even as He came to you in

the cave of Bethlehem: *'Dilexit me et tradidit semetipsum pro me'"* must the sinner say, even as the great St. Paul said it. Neither are the effects produced by the devotion to the Sacred Heart restricted to the individual. Statesmen and legislators are glancing uneasily at the social and political horizon of the opening twentieth century; lowering clouds are assuming threatening proportions; the unrest among the working masses, the luxury among the leisured classes; all these give thinking men matter for serious reflection. Human remedies of all kinds are being thought out; but no sooner is one tried than it is discarded as useless and replaced by another just as useless. Is there, then, no remedy? "Is there no balm in Galaad, and is there no physician there? Why, then, are not the wounds of My people healed?" Yes, there is one Balm and one Physician, and only one: *"Restaurare omnia in Christo":* the Blessed Sacrament, the divine Balm, the Sacred Heart, the divine Physician.

The reception of holy communion by the people, not simply once a year as an obligation binding under pain of sin, not simply four times a year, but frequently as an act of personal reparation to our true Friend, whose love is so unrequited: behold the remedy for all our social, political, and moral evils. I am only quoting from the beautiful letter of the Archbishops of this country, who in 1874 thus wrote to His Holiness Pope Pius IX.: "We consider it no little part of our pastoral duty to propagate most diligently and impress most deeply on the hearts of the faithful the devotion to the Sacred Heart—a devotion which, not without reason, we judge to have been divinely revealed in these evil days of the Church, as an antidote against the poison of error and as an impenetrable shield with

which the faithful may fight without danger the battle now raging."

It is time to conclude. Our Lord and Saviour, choosing, Himself, the day after the octave of Corpus Christi for the feast of the Sacred Heart, seems to say to each one of us: "Although what I have done for the soul in the Sacrament of the altar is so great a proof of My love, yet even after all this the ocean of My love is still inexhaustible. I can only point to My Heart and say:

"Behold the Heart that has so loved mankind. What I have thus far accomplished is little compared to what I am still prepared to do, if you will only love Me in return: *'Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum Mihi.'* All that I have thus far done is only the manifestation of My love as it can be shown in this valley of tears, in this land of exile; all these grandeurs are only the frescoes on your prison walls. Other and boundless proofs of My love still remain, but they can be given only in the Father's house. *'Non potestis portare modo.' 'Sed quando venerit id quod perfectum est, tunc evacuabitur quod ex parte est.'*"

This great Eucharistic Congress is a triumphant demonstration to the world of our lively and loving faith in the Adorable Sacrament of the altar, and a sure presage that the prayer which goes up from all our hearts, "Thy Eucharistic kingdom come!" will draw down countless graces upon our glorious republic, will lead hundreds of our fellow-countrymen on and on, up to the true light of faith, by which we see indeed dimly, until at length faith shall be swallowed up in vision, the veils that now hide our Eucharistic King shall be rent in twain, and we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is.

CHAPTER LVII.

The Love of the Sacred Heart for the Eternal Father.—The Apostleship of Prayer.—The Twofold Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

LOVE! Is there a word in any language that awakens such echoes in the human heart as that short word—love? It vibrates through every faculty of the soul of man, reviving in the memory forms and reminiscences that had been forgotten long since; it illuminates the intellect with thoughts unnumbered, and lights up in the will fires that were well-nigh extinguished. It is like a torrent carrying everything away with it in its mighty current, which nothing can resist until it has attained its term.

The whole history of the human race might be summed up in the revelation of each man's love. Is there among us one who does not feel in the depth of his soul that his love is the pivot around which revolve all his desires and his appreciations, all his sympathies and his aspirations, his joys, as likewise his sorrows—in short, his happiness or his misery? Love, then, may be said to be the whole of man. It may be, as it is destined to be, his salvation; it may be, as alas! too frequently it is, his destruction, but it is ever the great question of love that decides his happiness, both in this life and in eternity. "My love is my weight," says St. Augustine; that is to say, that we are borne upward or downward, straightforward or out of our path, just as we are drawn by the force of our love, which is the impelling motive of everything within us.

And a greater doctor than St. Augustine—the Master of all the doctors and the Teacher of the evangelists—had long before told us that "where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also" (Matt. vi. 21).

We are—to use the sweet language of Our Lord Himself—"the children of the kingdom;" of that holy kingdom wherein love has its law and its last end. If it follows its law, it will infallibly attain its end; all things will be in order, because charity, that queen of virtues, governing all the rest, will be in order within us (Cant. ii. 4), and God will find us on the last day "conformable to the image of His Son," and consequently we shall be numbered among the predestinate (Rom. viii. 29).

Now where shall we go in order to learn this divine law regarding love, and to ascertain its supreme object? True, we have the precept delivered of old to the ancient people of God, which precept will be heard again on the sacred lips of the Incarnate Word (Mark xii. 30), but sweet as is the command to love the Lord our God, sweeter far will it be, and far more powerful over the heart of man, to learn of the human Heart of God Himself the character of that love.

Were we to draw out all that might be said concerning the subject before us, we should far exceed the humble scope and the purpose of the present work. The love of the human Heart of Jesus for the Eternal Father! Eternity will reveal to us the shoreless, fathomless ocean those words convey, and the marvelous beauties contained in its depths.

But hidden as was the life of the Heart of Jesus with His Father, it is given us even here below to catch more than glimpses of that love which was, if we may dare to say so, as the ruling passion of His soul. In His formal discourses, as in the spon-

taneous expressions that flowed from His lips sent thither by "the abundance of His Heart," we discover the supreme motive of that love which prompted the Son of God to take human flesh, to borrow a human heart, and to come down to dwell among us. Far away in the eternal hills we seem to hear the accents of the Only-Begotten of the Father, the everlasting Word. "One Heart at least shall love Thee, one soul at least shall adore Thee with a love that will be worthy of Thee, and since man, the work of Thy hands, has by sin betrayed Thee, one Man shall repair Thy wrongs and win back to Thee Thy creation. Behold, I come that I should do Thy will" (Ps. xxxix. 8, 9). Had God never been outraged by sin there would still have been an inadequacy of love, of worship, of religion, toward Him, for how could what is finite render what is due to the Infinite? The love of the Sacred Heart adequately supplies all this, and to do so is its primary office upon earth, its noblest and most glorious prerogative.

Now do we not see that in this the Sacred Heart becomes at once our great Exemplar, and that our love for that Heart will necessarily lead us to the love of the Eternal Father?

We have just struck on the rock upon which genuine devotion to the Sacred Heart and an earnest participation in its apostleship are based. Shall we be forgiven if we say that, perhaps, the love of Jesus for the Father enters too superficially into our reflections concerning the Sacred Heart as well as into our practical devotion to it?

St. Augustine, desiring to elucidate certain profound dogmas hard to be comprehended by the human intellect, exclaims: "Attend to your hearts," and then, by a clear analogy, he brings down to our

compass the great truths he is desirous of teaching. The same method may well be employed in the subject that occupies us at present, more especially as it is a question of love, the seat of which is in the heart. Who among us has not experienced that all that is dear to one we love becomes for his sake likewise dear to us? Such is the tendency—such the power of love. Now, something altogether analogous takes place in reference to the love we bear our blessed Lord. We assimilate to ourselves the affections of His Heart, involuntarily, gradually, and as it were unconsciously observing in our own a like order, and thus it is that our love is interpreted, not only by devotion *to* the Sacred Heart of Jesus, but also by union *with* that Heart in its most intimate sentiments and desires.

Now, there was not a word that Our Lord uttered during His pilgrim life on earth, not an action that He performed, not a suffering to which He submitted, that does not reveal the master-love of His all-holy soul, and which was not destined to draw the hearts of men to a deeper knowledge and consequently a stronger love of His Eternal Father.

In the first year of His public ministry, we hear Him, in the Sermon on the Mount, putting forth the glory of their heavenly Father as the rightful motive prompting men to the exercise of good works, exhorting them so to act that they may be the children of their Father who is in heaven, and to make the perfection of that Father the model of their own. If He threatens, it is with the loss of the reward that heavenly Father would give them; it is the Father's eye beholding their secret prayer and alms-deeds with which they are to be content. It is, again, their Father who knows what is needful for them, even before they pray to Him. In a

word, throughout the whole of His discourse we feel we are listening to One who has before His mind and in His Heart one all-absorbing Object, with the love of whom He desires before all things to inspire His hearers. Later on, we hear Him declaring that they who shall do the will of His Father who is in heaven will be regarded by Him as His "brother and sister and mother" (Matt. xii. 50). See the connection—in proportion to our love of His Father will be the love of Jesus for us. Again, it is the character of the Father and His yearning love for men that are shadowed forth in the parables, and in His familiar conversations with His disciples the Father's name was ever on His lips. So ravishing had been His utterances regarding Him at the discourse after the Last Supper, that Philip, out of himself, as it were, with the loveliness of the Being brought before his mental vision, broke forth in those memorable words: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough."

As time pressed on, and still the hearts of many remained closed and hardened, Our Lord appeared like one whose case was growing desperate, and who grasped at every occasion, in season and out of season, in which to bring before men the claims of His heavenly Father. Thus it is we hear Him, when the end was drawing near, speaking openly, to the Pharisees and the rulers of the people, of His Father as their God. He seems to hide Himself in His oneness with the Father, and to retire into the dazzling splendor of that Father's glory: "My glory is nothing—it is My Father that glorifieth Me" (John viii. 54). Finally, it is the Father's love that is the supreme reward promised to such as love the Son: "If any man love Me, he shall be loved by the Father;" as if He would say: Noth-

ing greater or more precious can I promise you as a recompense for your love of Me: for to be loved by My Father consummates and crowns all.

He declared the Father's will to be His own nourishment, which meant that it was so precious to Him that it held to Him the place of material food and of every other thing, while the first recorded word spoken by Our Lord is of His Father, as is likewise the last He breathed forth upon the cross (Luke ii. 49; xxiii. 46).

Has not enough been said for our purpose? We ought for a teacher who, while he would instruct us in the great science of divine love, would at the same time allure our hearts by the loveliness of the form in which his lessons would be clothed. Such has been given to us. Our eyes have seen our Teacher, and our ears have heard His words admonishing us (Is. xxx. 20, 21), and He has drawn us by the cords of Adam and by the bonds of love (Osee xi. 4).

But if the Heart of Jesus attracts us to the Father, and becomes to us the model of our love for Him, inducing us to love, adore, and serve Him in every possible way in union with that Heart, it likewise sets before us by its own example the characters of reparation, together with that love of souls which naturally results from it, and both of which are the spontaneous outcome of the purest love of God.

The wrongs of an outraged parent or friend are repaired in a twofold manner: first, by sympathy and an increase of tenderness on the part of the person offering the reparation, whether it be for his own failings or for those of others; secondly, if it be the latter case, by leading back the offenders to sentiments of sorrow for the wound they have

inflicted. That sorrow will be the source of a more devoted love. Of all this, Our Lord is our supreme Exemplar. He was the Repairer by excellence of all His Father's wrongs. He repaired them by His love, by His sorrow for sin, by the sufferings He voluntarily endured for it, by His adoration, and by His whole life. He repaired them also by leading back souls to His Father, by making Him known to men, by extending His kingdom upon earth.

Now, this is what the Heart of Jesus asks of us. He asks us to unite with Him in thus repairing His Father's outraged glory. He asks us to repair in like manner the personal wrongs which He Himself received during His mortal life, and the ingratitude with which His love has ever been and still is repaid by the greater part of Christians. The imitation, then, of the Sacred Heart in its love of the Eternal Father, forms the very basis of the true spirit of our Apostleship. "Learn of Me," Our Lord may say, "how to love My heavenly Father, and in what manner to repair His glory, and thereby learn of Me the love and reparation that My Heart yearns to receive from you itself."

The Apostleship of Prayer the Perpetuation of the Work of the Incarnation.

Our Lord one day said to the Jews these remarkable words: "I came down from heaven to do the will of Him that sent Me. Now this is the will of the Father who sent Me; that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing, . . . that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have life everlasting" (John vi. 38-40). In these words Our Lord distinctly makes known the pur-

pose of His Incarnation. He came down from heaven, He says, to do His Father's will, and then He goes on to state in what that all-holy will consists. He willed that of all that He had given to His only Son for His heritage—all that vast humanity, all the nations and peoples and tribes of the earth—He should lose nothing; and further, that every one who sees the Son—the image of the Father—and believes in Him, may be saved. To bring this about, the Son and Our Lord came upon earth, toiled, suffered, and died.

But His passible life being ended, Jesus, our Head, having ascended into heaven, willed to leave on earth members who should perpetuate His work until the end of time, and by the same means that He had Himself employed when dwelling among us. We know how He performed His work; how He accomplished His Father's will. The greater part of His thirty-three years was spent in prayer. From the first moment of His Incarnation He prayed. During His infancy and childhood, when, having submitted Himself to the ordinary conditions of that early stage of life, He could perform no external work, He prayed. The eighteen years of His hidden life at Nazareth, dating from the time when He was found in the Temple conversing with the doctors, were passed in the hidden apostolate of prayer, and it was by this way only that, at that period of His life, He advanced His "Father's business," which, while yet a child in years, He had declared was to Him an imperative preoccupation. "I *must* be about My Father's business" (Luke ii. 49). When He passed to His public life, we find Him again retiring into the mountains and spending His nights in secret converse with His Father after His days of toil, and

at length when all was finished, and the hour of His supreme sacrifice had arrived, He still prayed upon His cross.

And various as were its forms, innumerable as were its objects, if we regard them in detail, the one great unending prayer of Jesus which summed up all within itself was this: that of all that His Father had given Him for an inheritance He might lose nothing. Such is the very essence of that prayer so universal in its extent, so apostolic in its character, so ardent in its zeal, that ascended without ceasing from the Sacred Heart to the bosom of the Father.

To the end expressed in that prayer, likewise tended all that Our Lord wrought on earth. This was the object of His labors and fatigues,—this the aim of all His preaching and miracles, this the cause of His lifelong sacrifice, the consummation of which was upon Calvary.

Now, when we speak of union with the Heart of Jesus, we mean union with that Heart in its prayers, in its toils, in its sacrifice for the glory of Him whom Our Lord specially delighted to make known to us as our common Father, "My Father and your Father" (John xx. 17). This union of our hearts with the Heart of Jesus is peculiarly precious to Him, not only because it is a testimony of our love for Himself personally, but likewise because it glorifies the Father by carrying on, as it were, the great work of the Incarnation, the end of which is, as has been already seen by Our Lord's own words, the accomplishment of His Father's will. "This is the will of My Father, that of all He hath given Me, I should lose nothing."

As then our apostleship has for its main object to draw us to that union and to perfect us therein, it

may be said with truth that it is a most real perpetuation of the work of the Incarnation, inasmuch as the members continue that work which their Head had commenced. And this explains what Our Lord said to His disciples, that it is "one that soweth and another that reapeth." He was the divine Sower, but He expired, sighing out the expression of His yet unsatisfied thirst for the gathering in of His harvest. We have entered into His labors, to continue His work, then to reap with Him the harvest of souls, that so both the Sower and the reapers may rejoice together at the great harvest-home above in the kingdom of the Father (John iv. 36-38).

Assuredly, if we reflect a little upon the honor and the privilege that Our Lord has conferred upon us in associating us to so noble a work, we should hardly waste our thoughts and time and energies, as it is to be feared too many among us do, upon the trifles that surround us; we should not, if we were penetrated with the thought of that great mission to which each one of us, in his measure, is called, suffer our hearts and minds to be deterred by them from their legitimate preoccupation with the interests of God's glory. We should rather be induced to make of all that came in our way a matter of self-sacrifice in union with the sacrifice of Our Lord, for the intention for which He became Incarnate, toiled, and died.

As friends of the Sacred Heart, and associates of its holy League of Prayer, this should be our one great aim and dominant solicitude: that of all that His Father has given Him for His inheritance, Our Lord shall lose nothing—not one of the souls, if that might be, for whom He shed His blood; that none of His priests should ever fall from the sublime per-

fection of their state, nor any of those consecrated to Him, in whatever way it may be, degenerate from their vocation; that the nations already possessing the true faith may never lose it, and that those as yet sitting in the darkness of heathendom may be evangelized, so that no tribe or people or nation may be excluded from the royal inheritance of the Son of God, but that all may be brought to the knowledge and love of His holy name.

This is our work which should ever be "before us," that is to say, before the "illuminated eyes of the heart" (Eph. i. 18), thus continually extending our horizon and animating us to greater devotedness to the cause of God, to the interests of Jesus Christ. This is, indeed, to enter into and fulfil the dearest wish of the Heart of Jesus, who desires to find cooperators upon earth in the great work for which He lived and died; souls having one mind with Him (1 Cor. ii. 16), and who regard all else as merely subservient to that of hastening the coming of the kingdom. To such as these, "*Adveniat regnum tuum*" will be the expression of their entire lives. The substance of those words and the thirst for their accomplishment will mingle with all their thoughts and accompany them in all their actions, lending to them an apostolic intention and a supernatural energy.

This is why we have said that the apostleship of the Sacred Heart is a perpetuation of the work of the Incarnation, and being so, to share in that apostleship is one of the noblest aspirations, the most solid happiness, and the most sanctifying privilege that we can possess here below.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is Twofold—Reparatory and Apostolic.

We have, in the first place, seen that the master-love of the Sacred Heart, if we may so speak, is love of the Eternal Father, and further, that from that love, as from a parent source, flows a double torrent of desire both tending to the same term. That double outpouring issuing from the very depths of the Heart of Jesus never separates, never divides. It flows on like two streams, both emanating from the same fountain-head, mingling their rapid currents until they are swallowed up in the ocean. It will have been seen that the thirst to repair the outraged glory of God His Father, and zeal to bring the whole world to His knowledge and love, were the twofold yet inseparable desire emanating from that which we have called the master-love of the Sacred Heart.

Our Lord thus becomes Himself the Teacher, the infallible Teacher of the nature of devotion to His adorable Heart, showing us that reparation and apostolic zeal form together its essential character. To console and sympathize with its sorrows, to compensate as far as is possible for its wrongs, its disappointments, its frustrated love, and to employ every available means, but especially that of prayer, for gaining to it new adorers, new repairers, and for winning back those who have forsaken it, such becomes the imperative necessity of souls who truly love Our Lord. This is the motive of all their efforts; this the aim of all various devotions and pious practices; this the impelling force urging them to deny themselves. The voice of an outraged love seems ever appealing to their sympathies and touching those chords within their hearts that sor-

row alone can reach. But more even than this is contained in the plaints of that wounded Heart. They tell of souls who are being lost—souls for whom it shed its life's blood, and it becomes a suppliant asking for cooperators in the work of their redemption. It complains indeed that it has sought for one that would grieve with it, but there was none; and for one that would comfort it, but found none (Ps. lxviii. 21); but it wills that those who condole with its sorrows should practically endeavor to diminish the cause of them. Now, the cause of the sorrows of the Sacred Heart is sin; whatever other form we may give it, it always returns to that one comprehensive definition, sin in some of its manifold varieties and degrees. Reparation, then, in order to be real, must consist not only of compassion for Our Lord's griefs, but of compensation to the utmost of our power, by reducing the measure of sin in ourselves and in our brethren.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart, far from being then, as some appear to suppose, a devotion wholly consisting of tender sentiments, is, when rightly understood, the most perfect observance of the first and great commandment, a powerful means, therefore, for leading souls to the practice of solid virtue, and of active and devoted zeal for the dearest interests of God. We have seen that if we really love the Sacred Heart we shall become gradually imbued with its affections, imitators of its virtues, and devoted cooperators with it in its work.

God had already set before us as a law and a duty what the Sacred Heart teaches us by love, and it is this peculiar character of the teaching of that Heart that renders it so adapted to this latter age in which charity has grown cold, and

when egotism is gnawing at the very vitals of society.

Yes, let us weep, as heretofore the pious women of Jerusalem, over the sorrows of Our Lord, but at the same time let us be mindful of the words He addressed to them when He told them to weep for themselves and for their children; let us weep also for our sins and for those of our brethren, whose misdeeds are perhaps in many instances the offspring of our own bad example, or of our neglect in fulfilling the duty imposed on us of praying for one another.

The saints attributed to themselves the evils that befell Christianity and the sins that were committed throughout the world. If our humility can not reach thus far, we may at least, without any exaggeration, reflect with sorrow that many sins might have been prevented, many more graces procured for souls, had we entered more generously into the design of Our Lord in revealing the devotion to His Sacred Heart. He asked for repairers of His cruel wrongs, and cooperators, and the one can not exist without the other. The desire of making reparation is inseparably bound up with that of promoting Our Lord's dearest interests. These are the two streams whose waters are ever mingling and flowing on together toward the same term, and that term is the glorification of Our Saviour's loving Heart.

Very acceptable, indeed, to that Heart are the sentiments of tender condolence which are awakened within us when we hear of sins committed against God, and of the coldness and neglect His love too often meets with; but if our reparation remained there, if it did not animate us to greater fidelity on our own part—if it did not,

moreover, assume an *apostolic* form, by eliciting from us the earnest prayer for the conversion of sinners, for the perseverance of the tempted, for the decrease of sin in all its terrible varieties—in a word, for all that touches the glory of God and the salvation of souls, our reparation would be mere sentiment, the result of a transient and sensible devotion.

In this then, as in everything else, let us look to our divine Model, who from the silent tabernacle whispers to our souls: "Learn of Me,"—learn of Me the characters of divine love—how strong in its tenderness, how delicate in its sympathy, how constant in its devotedness, how ardent yet how compassionate in its zeal! Let us pray fervently and perseveringly that our love may increase, for love will teach us all things. Much communication with the Sacred Heart will produce in our hearts a similarity of sentiments, a likeness of minds, a mutual confidence as between friend and friend, whence all its interests will become ours. Then we shall comprehend experimentally that true devotion to the Sacred Heart, far from being sentimental or effeminate, is strong in its very principle and full of holy energy in its results. While gently and lovingly pouring balm into the wounded heart, it vigorously combats the enemy by whom that wound has been inflicted, and that enemy is sin. While condoling with the grief that the prodigal has caused and striving by a more devoted love to compensate in some sort for its bitterness, it seeks out the wanderer, by procuring for him, by prayer and self-sacrifice, actual graces impelling him to return, for only his return can fully heal the wound his wanderings have caused.

Nothing more need be added in order to render

it evident that the devotion to the Sacred Heart is at once reparatory and apostolic, and that the first implies the second, which in its turn is an outcome of the first.*

*From *The Voice of the Sacred Heart.*

CHAPTER LVIII.

Pious Practices in Honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In his excellent work, *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus,* Father Noldin, S.J., says: "Whosoever desires to practice the devotion to the Heart of Jesus fruitfully and profitably must fix upon some prayers to be recited either daily, weekly, or it may be once a month or once a year. A general resolution to be devout to the Heart of Jesus is of little use, unless at the same time the manner in which the devotion shall be practiced is definitely determined upon. In doing this it is well to bear in mind the golden maxim of St. John Berchmans: *'Non multum, sed constanter.'* Let only a few practices be chosen which can be performed with recollection, without haste; but what is once begun must not lightly be given up. It is not the number and length of our petitions which render them acceptable to God, but the fervor, the fidelity, the perseverance of the suppliant.

"Finally, too much stress can not be laid on the fact that all devotional exercises are not alike suited for all persons. Any particular one is therefore not to be condemned and rejected because it does not commend itself to or suit the feelings of one individual. Just as all musical instruments are not tuned to the same key, nor do all the strings of the same instrument give out one and the selfsame sound, so all Christians do not pray in the same manner; nay, the same soul is wont to frame his petitions in different forms at different times. And

only when each prays and sings in his own way does the voice of prayer ascend from the Church of God to the throne of the Most High as the melodious notes of the organ, or a part-song of exquisite harmony." Some of the devotional exercises in use among the adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are mentioned by Father Noldin in the same book as follows:

1. They join the League of the Sacred Heart, and daily make the Morning Offering of the Apostleship of Prayer, thus: "O my God, I offer Thee my prayers, works and sufferings this day in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for the intentions for which He pleads and offers Himself in holy Mass, in thanksgiving for Thy favors, in reparation for our offenses, and for the petitions of all our associates: especially this month for the general intention recommended by the Holy Father."

2. They regard pictures and images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with devout reverence. In regard to these pictures Blessed Margaret Mary writes: "Our divine Lord assured me that it was especially pleasing to Him to be adored under the symbol of the natural heart, and that He desired representations of it to be publicly exposed, in order, He added, thereby to touch the insensible hearts of men. He also promised me to pour into the hearts of all who should venerate such pictures the superabundance of His gifts and graces, and to grant to all places where they should be exposed for special veneration all manner of rich blessings." Hence it has become customary among those who have a devotion to the Heart of Jesus to put up in their houses, their own rooms, or even on their desk or work-table, a picture of the Sacred Heart, to which they pay devout reverence.

3. They keep the feast of the Sacred Heart with fervor and devotion.

4. They practice special devotions on the first Friday of every month. The first Friday of the month is observed in a special manner because Our Lord enjoined upon Blessed Margaret to receive holy communion on the first Friday of every month in order to repair the irreverences committed during the month against the Blessed Sacrament, and also because He indicated to her certain devotional exercises to be practiced on the first Friday of the month for the purpose of obtaining the grace of final perseverance.

5. They offer some prayer or pious exercise (*e.g.*, an act of consecration) *daily*, in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

6. They are assiduous in paying frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and often approach the holy table. Our Lord laid the injunction upon Blessed Margaret to receive holy communion as frequently as she was permitted to do so. It is an excellent plan always to go to communion with some definite intention, for some special object; for instance, in thanksgiving for benefits received from God; to obtain some particular grace for ourselves or for others; to increase in the knowledge of self and the love of God; in obedience to the will of God, who desires that we should receive holy communion; or in order to acquire a greater likeness to Our Lord. In any case, it is only right, whether one joins the Association of the Communion of Reparation or no, to habituate one's self to offer one's communion in reparation and satisfaction for the offenses committed against Our Lord in the Sacrament of His love, and to do this in union with the thousands of communions received and offered daily

with this intention by the members of the aforesaid association.

7. They place all their trust in the Heart of Jesus and consequently have recourse to it in all their necessities. In all sufferings, vexations, and difficulties they fly to the Heart of Jesus. It is the Heart of Him who said: "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28).

8. They raise their heart to Jesus by frequent ejaculatory prayers. They do not wait until temptations and adversities compel them to turn to Him; they hold frequent intercourse with Him in the midst of their work and occupations. Now it is an act of love and thanksgiving which they breathe forth; now an ascription of praise or act of adoration, now an act of petition or propitiation, by which they venerate the Sacred Heart; and these tokens of reverence and affection are redoubled on days and in seasons that are specially dedicated to the honor of that Heart. They keep a picture of it before them in order to be more often reminded of it, and incited to pray that they may be kindled by the flames which consume that Heart, and illumined by the sight of the cross and wound and thorns; stimulated to renewed zeal, inspired with fresh courage to sacrifice all and bear all for Christ's sake, who bore so much and sacrificed so much for them.

9. They often send up heartfelt entreaties for pardon, in order to make some amends to Our Lord for the irreverences and impieties committed against Him. Not one of all our pious exercises is so pleasing to Our Lord and so essential a part of our devotion as the work of propitiation and reparation. The worshipers of the Sacred Heart are, therefore, not satisfied with avoiding everything

that may grieve it; on the contrary, they strive by propitiation and reparation to afford it consolation and joy.

10. They make it their earnest endeavor to live, to labor, to pray, to suffer in constant union with the Heart of Jesus. For inasmuch as nothing is so well-pleasing to God as the Heart of His Son, nothing is more acceptable in His eyes than the soul which is united to that Heart: "He hath graced us in His beloved Son" (Eph. i. 6). Therefore they are wont to offer all their actions, prayers, and sufferings with the same intention with which Christ Himself prayed, labored, and suffered during His life on earth. This was Blessed Margaret's constant practice; she learned it from Our Lord Himself, and the Church instructs her priests to pray with the same intention: *"Domine, in unione illius divinæ intentionis, qua ipse in terris laudes Deo persolvisti, has tibi horas persolvo."*

11. They maintain an intimate intercourse with Jesus Christ. Familiar intercourse with Our Lord is the choicest, the sweetest fruit of the devotion to His Sacred Heart; for this all the saints longed, this was the object of their aspirations. It consists in consulting Him about all our affairs, both those that relate to time and to eternity. In Him as in the heart of a true friend we shall find sympathy, solace, and succor.

12. They strive to make their heart more and more like to the Heart of Jesus; they strive to become purer, more mortified, more humble, more gentle, more patient, more obedient, more forbearing, more yielding, more recollected, more zealous, to cultivate likeness to Our Lord in all their thoughts, affections, actions, in a word, to form their heart after the pattern, the example of His

divine Heart. In order to attain this end, it is essentially necessary to acquaint ourselves more closely, more accurately with the Heart of Our Lord and Master. In Holy Scripture He manifests Himself to us by the words He spoke, the actions He performed; and by meditation we penetrate more deeply into His Heart and acquire a knowledge of the most lofty dispositions, of the various virtues, in their highest perfection: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of Heart."

13. They consecrate themselves wholly and irrevocably to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We know that, in accordance with Our Lord's command, Blessed Margaret was for many years in the habit of writing letters to priests, Religious, and the laity for the purpose of commending to them and spreading the devotion she had so much at heart. That to which she gives the greatest prominence, and of which she speaks most emphatically in her letters, is consecration and oblation of one's self to the Sacred Heart. "The Redeemer," she writes, "generally requires complete self-abandonment from His friends." She puts forward different arguments to induce those whom she addresses to make this act of oblation. "It would give Our Lord singular pleasure," she writes on one occasion, "if you frequently renewed the entire sacrifice of yourself to Him, and practiced it faithfully."

Two things chiefly are comprised in the act of consecration. First, complete forgetfulness of self, *i.e.*, giving up entirely our own interests, profit, advantage, our own glory, and our own ease. It is the penalty of original sin, from which we all suffer more or less, that we are by far too self-occupied, too self-seeking,—that we think too highly of ourselves. Blessed Margaret Mary remarks, in regard

to the mortification of sensuality and pride: "If Christ is to live in our heart by His grace and His love, we must die to self, to our concupiscences, our passions, our self-indulgences—to all, in short, that belongs to our unmortified nature."

In the second place, this consecration consists in living entirely for Our Lord, *i.e.*, striving to love Him, to glorify and magnify Him to the utmost of our power and in as far as our circumstances permit. Consequently, abandoning all care of self to Him who cares for us, we must think only how to do our duty, our daily work as well as possible to the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to promote the interests of that Heart to the best of our knowledge and ability. Thus when about to undertake anything we ought first to implore counsel and assistance from Our Lord to enable us to accomplish it to His glory alone; and when our task is finished we must give Him thanks with all our heart, whether it be crowned with success or result in failure. Such is the plan of action, such the frame of mind of one who has dedicated himself entirely to the Heart of Jesus, and desires to live only for God. "It appears to me," writes Blessed Margaret, "that this single intention will render our actions more meritorious and more acceptable in God's sight than all that may be done without that intention."

"If you are faithful in doing the will of God in this life, your own will shall be accomplished throughout eternity," are the words of Blessed Margaret Mary. "The Heart of Jesus is at least worth yours. Leave all, and you will find all in the Sacred Heart. How sweet it will be to die after having had a constant devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus—of Him who will be Our Judge."

CHAPTER LIX.

The Promise of our Divine Redeemer to those who Venerate His Sacred Heart.

The Twelfth Promise in Particular.

1. I WILL give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.

2. I will establish peace in their houses.

3. I will console them in their sorrows.

4. I will be their sure refuge during life, and above all at the hour of death.

5. I will pour abundant blessings on all their undertakings.

6. Sinners shall find in My Heart a source and ocean of mercy.

7. Tepid souls shall become fervent.

8. Fervent souls shall rise thereby to the highest degrees of perfection.

9. I will bless every place where there is a picture of My Heart exposed and venerated.

10. I will give priests who spread this devotion a special power to move the hardest hearts.

11. All those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, never to be effaced.

There is a twelfth promise. It is found in a letter written by Blessed Margaret Mary in 1688 to Mère de Saumaise. The passage referred to is here given in full as rendered correctly by Father Thurston, S.J.:

12. "One Friday, during holy communion, He said to His unworthy servant—if she does not de-

ceive herself—'I promise thee, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, that its all-powerful love will grant to all those who communicate on nine consecutive first Fridays of the month the grace of final repentance. They shall not die in My disfavor, nor without receiving their (*sic*) Sacraments; for My divine Heart shall be their safe refuge at this last moment.'"

This twelfth promise has been the occasion from time to time of a great deal of excitement and even acrimonious controversy. The Rev. Ernest R. Hull, S.J., in a little book that bears the title, *Devotion to the Sacred Heart,* explains the twelfth promise in a comprehensive and luminous manner, and answers all objections and difficulties urged against it most satisfactorily. We have great pleasure in recommending this treatise to the reader. It has been published in pamphlet form by the Catholic Truth Society of Scotland. Father Hull fortifies his position by excerpts from other writers, a few of which we quote in part. A French writer in *Le Règne du Cœur de Jesus* comments as follows on the promises in general and on the twelfth promise in particular: "Our Lord did not make these promises except in favor of those who have a serious and constant devotion to His divine Heart. The fulfilment goes on a par with the devotion and will be more certain and abundant in proportion as the conditions laid down by Our Lord are more perfectly accomplished. By these marvelous promises the Heart of Jesus intends solely to induce us to return to Him love for love, in order that, fortified by this love, we may practice in their sublime perfection all the Christian virtues, even those which are the most difficult."

Referring specially to the twelfth promise the

pious author writes: "Let us begin by saying that, extraordinary as this promise appears, it really contains nothing new. A similar one is attached to the scapular of Mount Carmel. Let us also add that this promise is certain as regards its origin and its effects. It was certainly made to Blessed Margaret Mary . . . and it is certainly accomplished in favor of those who fulfil the conditions.

"It is, however, necessary to understand it in its true sense and to guard against all false interpretation. Our Lord does not say that those who accomplished the conditions demanded are dispensed from an attentive vigilance to avoid all sin, or from a courageous struggle to vanquish temptations and to fulfil all the commandments, or from assiduously employing all the means which belong to a true Christian life—especially prayer and penance. It gives us this assurance only, *viz.*, that those who perform these nine communions will obtain the graces necessary for the exact observance of the commandments and the evangelical counsels, for carrying the cross all the days of their life, and for persevering unto death in the narrow way which leads to heaven."

An English writer gives the following explanation in the small *Handbook of the Apostleship of Prayer,* which is circulated in England: "That these words (of the twelfth promise) are among the authentic writings of Blessed Margaret Mary is certain. It is also certain that they were neither condemned nor censured by the Church after the close examination to which all her writings were submitted in the process of her beatification, and though this must not be taken as implying that the Church authoritatively declares this particular revelation to

have been a fact, still it implies that there is nothing in it opposed to Catholic faith.

"While, therefore, we should not expect an authoritative declaration on the genuineness of this particular revelation, we may recognize that the Church leaves us free to accept it, provided always we understand it in a sense which nowise contradicts her teaching. For the same Lord whom we may believe to have made this revelation is He who teaches us always through the mouth of His Church.

"Now the sixteenth Canon of the Council of Trent says: 'If any one, who has not learnt it by special revelation, declares, with absolute and infallible certainty, that he is assuredly to receive the great gift of final perseverance, let him be anathema.' Those, therefore, who believe the twelfth promise to have been really made must take care to understand it in such a way as not to fall under the condemnation of this canon. In other words, their confidence in the promise must not be turned into presumption: they must not declare, as with absolute and infallible certainty, that, whatever they may do during the remainder of their lives, after making the Nine Fridays, they will in the end be saved.

"There are two phrases in the twelfth promise recorded by Blessed Margaret Mary which call for a word of explanation. 'One Friday,' she writes, *'if she does not deceive herself.'* That this expression does not necessarily imply a doubt in her mind as to this particular revelation, we gather from her use of it in recording other revelations, and from the fact that her Superiors had explicitly directed her to speak in this way when she referred to the divine favors she received. Again, at the end of the promise are the words: 'They shall not die in My disfavor, *nor without receiving their Sacraments.*' If it is

true that some good persons who are said to have made the Nine Fridays have, as it is alleged, died without the rites of the Church, the explanation might be given that Our Lord blessed their desire of the Sacraments with the graces which would have accompanied actual reception, or conferred those graces at the confession and communion which He foresaw would be the last.

"One word of warning ought to be given here. Some anxious souls who have frequently tried to complete the Nine Fridays and have never succeeded allow themselves to be disturbed by the thought that this is a bad sign, and that they will not persevere in grace to the end. Such anxiety is distinctly superstitious, and is altogether foreign to the spirit with which Our Lord's most merciful words are to be received."

Father Hull tells us how the "devil's advocate" objected to the twelfth promise and what reply was made to him. He writes: "In the course of the process of beatification, when the virtues and supernatural favors of Blessed Margaret Mary came under consideration, the promoter of the faith—the official popularly known as the 'devil's advocate' (we use Father Thurston's article*)—took exception to the Great Promise, objecting that Margaret Mary's visions several times took the form of an assurance of predestination given to living people; and he asks: 'Can one persuade one's self that the gift of final perseverance, which usually lies hidden in the inscrutable counsels of God, and is so rarely revealed, should so easily and frequently be revealed to that one person? Such revelations,' he adds, 'according to St. Francis de Sales, are to be suspected of their very nature.'

**The Month,* June, 1903.

"This was the 'devil's' argument. To which the promoter of the cause replied that: 'According to the correct teaching of theologians, from St. Thomas downward, devotion is not *true* devotion unless it finds the soul perfectly obedient to God; and on this account, in all matters of this sort, the tacit condition is always supposed, *viz.*, that the commandments of God (without which no one can enter eternal life) are diligently observed.' He then refers to other instances, such as 'the recommendations of the Rosary or the devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and other pious practices from which those devoted to them derive a strengthening hope of heavenly glory.' He then concludes: 'This is the only meaning of the promise—"that God will concede to those who carry out those practices, certain special graces by which they may keep the commandments and so enter into life."'

"He afterwards goes on to say that 'the devotion to the Sacred Heart is only a special form of the practice of the love of God; but any practice of the love of God involves keeping of the commandments. And, after all, this certainty of attaining the kingdom of heaven is not promised to everybody, but only to those who have consecrated themselves in an especial way to the honoring of the divine love.'

"It seems that this answer was sufficient to satisfy the objicient; and no further obstacle to the process was raised on this score."

Most pious souls interpret the twelfth promise in this sense, as Father Hull says: "If asked to state precisely what the promise does mean, we believe that, with a little help from the questioner, the reply would be vague but at the same time unobjectionable. 'It means,' they would say, 'that by the per-

formance of the Nine Fridays we shall receive some special grace to persevere to the end, to be sorry for our sins, and to die with such Sacraments as may be necessary at our last moments—always supposing that we do not abandon our *general* good purpose of living well and serving God faithfully. It is an encouragement to us, but not an inexorably mechanical law. It fills us with hope and devout assurance. It does not furnish grounds for recklessness and presumption.'"

An American writer* comments as follows on the twelfth promise: "*Certainty* as to the fulfilment of the promise depends on many things about which *certainty* can not be had. And so long as anything remains uncertain in this matter of salvation it is mere folly to run any risk. We must still work on in fear and trembling." And again on page xx.: "Granting, with theologians, that concerning our justification we may have some form of moral certainty which frees us from anxiety and sets the mind at rest, . . . still this so-called moral certainty of our being in the state of grace while receiving the communions of the Nine Fridays would not suffice to take away all anxiety and set our minds at rest about our salvation. Why? Because of the doubts that overhang the very meaning of the promise. As long as there can be any hesitancy as to the exact meaning of Our Lord's words, those who have made the Nine Fridays, and who feel, as it were, that they have made them worthily, must still remember that our divine Lord, neither in this revelation nor in any other, has spoken so clearly as to put their minds completely at rest concerning their eternal salvation. Far be it from us to set up a claim of

**Sacerdos* in the American *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, February, 1898.

absolute certainty in regard to the meaning of Our Lord's words to Blessed Margaret Mary. Even if the interpretation that we have given above is held as nothing more than highly probable, still this is sufficient to make us practice with the greatest alacrity and zeal the devotion of the Nine Fridays. A high degree of probability that a certain priceless treasure lies hidden in a field which I have bought is sufficient motive for me to spare no pains in searching for the treasure."

Christ our Lord has not failed to fulfil His promises of graces and blessings during life and at the hour of death to those who seek them in His Sacred Heart, as is attested by hundreds of thanksgivings published month after month by thirty-one periodicals in various languages. Faith in Christ's promises has evidently been richly rewarded. Jesus is faithful to those who love Him. Would that His Sacred Heart were known and loved by all men!

CHAPTER LX.

The Heart of Jesus in Prayer.

Let us imagine we see Jesus kneeling in the little house of Nazareth, His sacred hands reverently clasped, His eyes closed or raised to heaven. We have before us the Incarnate God praying to His Eternal Father. It will then refresh our souls to withdraw for a while within the silence and solitude of the holy house, and while we contemplate the scene with reverence let us endeavor to penetrate the Heart of Him who is praying there. So beautiful is the picture presented to our minds by the thought of Jesus in prayer that truly it might suffice to rivet our inward eye and claim our adoring love, without the addition of any comment.

Let us regard Him as the Wisdom of the Father, the Eternal Son, kneeling there in silent contemplation of the divine majesty unveiled before Him, while He pours out the eternal love, the burning prayer, which consumes His Sacred Heart. The labor of the day is over, and Jesus is now free to give Himself up unrestrainedly to that holy exercise which has not ceased to be the occupation of His soul amid His daily toil. How profound is the mystery of that divine communication which passes between the Eternal Father and the Eternal Son, between the human Heart of the Man-God and the Father in whose bosom He had dwelt from all eternity! Unchecked now by the external trammels to which in His Incarnation He had made Himself subject, He could deliver Himself up to the trans-

ports of His love, and taste, in His earthly exile, His old, His eternal delight of solitude with God.

But we must not forget that we are contemplating our divine Model in prayer; for we are not to suppose that we have chosen one too exalted for our imitation. No, Jesus prays as one of us. It is in Him a human Heart that throbs with love and desire, and He teaches us eloquently how to pray, and discloses qualities with which our prayer should be endowed. He has formally constituted Himself our Master in prayer, as in all other things. In His public life and in His Passion He has taught us even the very words in which we should present our petitions, or upon which they should be formed.

Now, it must be remembered that the Heart of Jesus did not change; what it prompted His sacred lips to pronounce for our example afterwards, it contained within itself, and expressed in its secret communications with the Father during the hidden life at Nazareth. Therefore, we have only to penetrate His Heart in order to hear Him praying to Our Father as well as His Father, teaching us thus to be unselfish in our prayer, and showing us that He carried all our necessities and interests in His Sacred Heart. We hear Him desiring the sanctification of the Father's name, the advancement of His kingdom, by which all peoples and nations may be brought to His knowledge and love; we find Him praying for the accomplishment of the Father's will by men on earth, even as it is accomplished in heaven. We shall hear Him also asking for "our daily bread," teaching us thus from whom we are, primarily, to expect the sustenance necessary for our temporal support, but instructing us, moreover, how earnestly and daily we are to pray for that "super-

substantial bread" without which we shall perish everlastingly.

There, too, we learn the humble petition for the forgiveness of our sins, and the condition by which we are to hope for that forgiveness—our own forgiveness, namely, of those who may have wronged us. Finally, we hear the cry for deliverance from temptation and every evil that may result from sin offered up for others as for ourselves. Beautiful prayers of the Heart of Jesus! May you be ever in our hearts also, ever ascending from them, in union with His Heart, to the bosom of Him who is Our Father likewise in heaven.

Let us, when reciting the *Pater Noster,* reflect that it is the expression of the prayer of the Sacred Heart during these long years of the hidden life, when Our Lord was apparently doing nothing toward the accomplishment of His great work on earth. Surely such a reflection will help to animate us with His Spirit in reciting it, and thus render it far more efficacious in promoting His interests than we must fear it too frequently is.

In contemplating the Heart of Jesus when engaged in prayer, we must have remarked the order which He observes therein. The sanctification of His Father's name, the coming of His kingdom, the perfect accomplishment of His will, are the objects of the opening petitions. Then follows the begging of those benefits which we are to ask for our neighbor and for ourselves, thus practically elucidating the teaching He afterwards gave when He declared that the first commandment of the Law was the love of God above all things; and that the second was to love our neighbor as ourselves; as also when He commanded us to seek first the kingdom of God and His justice. So will it be with us if charity is

rightly ordered in our souls. The love of God, and consequently the thirst for His glory, will hold supreme place in our hearts, from whence will flow spontaneously, as from its source, the love of our brethren and the quenchless desire for their salvation.

We have seen, too, the reverence with which Jesus prayed, a reverence which was at once tender and adoring, ready, and full of ardor. Holy Scripture tells us that "He was heard for His reverence," and makes known to us the fervor with which He prayed by telling of the "strong cry and tears" with which it was accompanied. His reverence was so deep because He knew the majesty of Him to whom He prayed, and the intensity of fervor with which He prayed resulted from the vehemence of His desire.

From our hearts also the "strong cry" will come forth which shall "pierce the clouds" when we shall be filled with the spirit of the prayer of Our Lord's Heart, and when we have learned to love like Him, with the same kind of love, unselfish, self-forgetting, and full of desire for the things that He desired.

Finally, we too may participate in that delight in the holy exercise of prayer which we have witnessed in the Heart of Jesus. Love is its source—love which renders prayer not an isolated act distinct from the other duties of the day, but rather a more free, more unrestrained exercise of that which is ever going on within our hearts. He who loves God ardently longs for the hour when, external occupations being over, he can give full scope to the effusions of his heart, alone with his Beloved.

For him the great duty of prayer has nothing irksome, even when deprived of sensible consolation.

The companionship of God has for him no tediousness. Prayer is for him solitude with God, where he need have no reservations, where he need fear no criticism; he is alone with his Father, as he will be in the hour of death, as he will be throughout eternity. His soul will remain tranquilly at rest with God—his heart beating in union with the Heart of Jesus, and even in trial and in suffering where this union exists there is peace.

And now, as the fruit of this meditation, let us ask ourselves the cause of our frequent aridity in prayer, an aridity perhaps which we have falsely attributed to some supernatural visitation, but which, we must in all sincerity acknowledge, proceeds from the want of union between our hearts and that of Jesus; the absence of an earnest, absorbing desire for all that regards His glory; an indifference to that fusion of interests which would render our hearts one with His, and make our prayer so fruitful an exercise for our own good and for the good of the Church and of society. We have the same objects to pray for now as Jesus had in the solitude of Nazareth. If, therefore, we do not find wherewith to occupy our minds and hearts in prayer, we can only attribute it to our little love, to our apathy for the advancement of God's glory. Let us go in spirit to Nazareth and entreat: "Heart of Jesus, teach me to pray—'Our Father.' "*

*From *The Heart of Jesus of Nazareth.*

CHAPTER LXI.

The Meekness of the Heart of Jesus.

MEEKNESS is one of the chosen virtues of the Heart of Jesus; it shone in His birth; it was like a heavenly language which said to the humble shepherds: Approach this Infant, fear not; He is full of goodness, of benignity, and of meekness.

Meekness or sweetness is the daughter of humility: every humble heart is as sweet as it is humble. What then should be the Heart of Jesus Christ? and how well was it not authorized to say to us: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart"! The principle of this ineffable sweetness was in His Heart; He had but to follow its movements; His soul was always under the dominion of the Word, which governed and directed it in all things. However, no soul ever had sentiments so lively, so delicate; no trait of injustice or of malice toward His enemies ever escaped Him, although He had all the aversion of a Man-God for their evil dispositions.

The holy evangelists tell us little in regard to the exterior of Jesus; but that which they have told us suffices to prove that a love tender and full of charms shone in all His actions. Born of a virgin, formed in the womb of His Mother by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, destined to be the instrument of the most glorious soul that ever existed, the body of Jesus should be infinitely more beautiful than that of Adam in the terrestrial paradise. Besides, had not the prophets foretold that He would be the most beautiful among the children of men?

And to know that majestic sweetness shone in His features, in His words, and in all His movements, when He appeared upon earth, we have only to observe the effect that His appearance produced upon those who surrounded Him. He took for His emblem that gentlest of all creatures, the lamb; and the characteristics of this emblem were so strikingly depicted in His exterior deportment that St. John the Baptist had no sooner perceived His holy face, than he cried: "Behold the Lamb of God."*

In His infancy it was natural that His countenance should wear an expression full of sweetness, which was the particular characteristic that one would expect to find. For if it be true that an innocent candor always shines in the eyes of infancy, before reason has yet enlightened them with its light, it should have shone in a much greater degree from the eyes of the Infant Jesus, as He only consented to pass through the years of early life to gain us more surely to Himself; therefore it is probable that He assumed the appearance of infancy under its most attractive form: He voluntarily softened

*Jesus, my tender Lamb, I would, by this sweet name, make myself master of Thy Heart. This name awakens in Thee, I know, sentiments of mercy and love, of which I have great need, and which are sweeter to my heart than all others, for they speak to it of hope and banish all thoughts of fear or terror. O divine Heart! O Lamb immolated from the beginning of the world; Lamb who bearest the sins of the world; Lamb invoked by the saints of both Testaments, Lamb which was foreshadowed by the victim under the hand of the patriarchs, and which each day immolatest Thyself in reality by my hands; whom John the Baptist pointed out, whom the Christians invoked; Lamb which ornamentest the tomb of the martyrs and the Eucharistic chalice; O Jesus! Lamb of God and of men, be my sweetness and my strength, my purity and my life!—*Mgr. Baudry.*

the brilliant splendor of His intelligence, which shone in His infantine eyes, to assume in His countenance, along with the tenderest expression, that of the amiable joyfulness of a child of earth. And as He increased with age and showed Himself to the world, see how this character of sweetness evinced itself in His words, actions, and countenance. In walking by the shore of the Sea of Galilee He had only to say a word, and immediately one after another the Apostles quitted all to follow Him. "Follow Me," were the only words He addressed to them; and they devoted themselves to Him for life.

Jesus Christ conversed familiarly with the common people, with the poor, with children. He associated with rough men, and He bore with unalterable sweetness their weakness, their imprudence, their ignorance, their inconstancy. He repeated for their sakes the same discourses, He developed their ideas, and raised them by degrees to the knowledge of the most sublime mysteries; He animated their confidence, encouraged their good desires, corrected their false ideas; finally, He disdained not to call them His friends, and even His brothers. He lived with them as a father rather than as a master; He treated them even almost as equals, and when one considers how greatly He was their superior, not alone on account of His divinity, but according to His humanity, one is ravished by His sweetness and condescension. His doctrine was sublime, and His manner all opposed to prejudice and passion; but His discourses were accompanied with so much grace and attractiveness that He persuaded, touched and attracted every heart. His sweetness appeared principally under the contradictions that He experienced during His public life and in the manner in

which He justified Himself from the odious reproaches that were cast upon Him.

One day, passing through Samaria, He encountered, near one of the wells, called the fountain of David, a woman drawing water. Who can not recall to mind the touching conversation of Jesus Christ with the Samaritan woman? This woman had not lived a regular life, nevertheless no word of reproach escaped from the lips of the divine Saviour. Of what use would it be to discourage and dishearten? Jesus Christ loved better to make use of words full of light and of sympathetic commiseration, capable of touching and reclaiming: "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee, 'Give Me to drink,' thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water!"

I can not pass in silence the fact that He never showed any weariness when the multitude pressed around Him, when the sick tried to touch the hem of His garments, or when the mothers desired Him to lay His hands upon their little ones.

While the Son of Mary was dining with a Pharisee, a woman who did not bear a good reputation in the city of Jerusalem broke an alabaster vase filled with perfumed oil over the feet of Jesus Christ, which she had washed with her tears and dried with her hair and her kisses. This conduct seemed strange to the master of the house and Jesus said: "Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet" (this was customary in the East); "but she with tears hath washed My feet and with her hair hath wiped them; I say to thee many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much!"

Never were there uttered words so touchingly

sweet, so sublimely noble as those of the Saviour which He uttered at this time; they will reecho through all ages to gain hearts to Jesus Christ.

After the feast of Tabernacles they brought into the Temple, and before Jesus, a guilty woman. The evil-minded Jews demanded of Jesus what they should do with this woman, and reminded Him that according to the Jewish law she should be stoned to death. Jesus cast down His eyes, and after keeping silence for a while, bent down and traced some words upon the ground and said: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The crowd understood, and retired one after the other, filled with confusion. Then the Saviour said to the sinner: "Woman, hath no man condemned thee? . . . Neither will I condemn thee; go and sin no more!"

This interview with the sinful woman in the Temple is most touching; there is revealed in the language and conduct of Jesus Christ, in connection with this woman, the goodness of a God, the wisdom of a God, and the mercy and sweetness of a God. Seek in modern times or in antiquity and you will find nothing like it; no action equal to it; it was the most sublime ray of the glory of God. Can you be surprised after that at this passage of Isaias, which foretells the sweetness of the Saviour: "He shall not be sad, nor troublesome . . . He shall not cry nor have respect to persons, neither shall His voice be heard abroad . . . The bruised reed He shall not break and smoking flax He shall not quench." Enlightened by the Holy Spirit Isaias has thus drawn the portrait of the Saviour. Are you astonished at the language of St. Anselm in the eleventh century, saying: "Good Jesus, how sweet Thou art to those who think of Thee, who love

Thee! I know not truly, because it is beyond me, whether Thou art dearer to the hearts of those who love Thee as dwelling in flesh or in remaining the Word; in Thy abasement or in Thy sublimity. For those who love Thee, oh, it is sweeter to see Thee born of a virgin than to know that Thou wert begotten of the Father before light in the splendor of the saints! I prefer Thee in the form of a slave to that of Thy divinity equal to God. It is sweeter to contemplate Thee dying upon the cross, in presence of the Jews, than to admire Thee as Lord of the angels in heaven; to follow Thee as obedient to the ways of the world than to salute Thee in possession of the empire of the universe." Are you astonished that the celebrated St. Catherine of Siena, speaking of Jesus Christ, in the sweet language of Italy, cries continually: *"Buon Gesu, Signor mio dolce! O me Dio amor dolce! O dolce Gesu!"* "Good Jesus, my sweet Lord! O my God, my sweet Love! O sweet Jesus!" Are you surprised that in writing to the Popes and cardinals of her time St. Catherine always began her letter thus: *"Carissimo padre in Gesu' dolce Cristo"*—"Dearest Father in our sweet Jesus Christ." Yesterday and to-day, is not Jesus Christ for us all the *"dolce Gesu"* of St. Catherine of Siena?

What sweetness during the course of His dolorous Passion! After having rendered in a few words a modest account of His conduct and doctrine He kept silence; and He accomplished even to His last sigh that which was foretold of Him, that He would be slaughtered like an innocent lamb, without opening His mouth to complain.

His friends, His dear apostles, joined themselves to His enemies to fill up the measure of His sorrows. He allowed Himself to be kissed by the

traitor, and in return for reproaches He uttered only these sweet words: "Friend, whereto art thou come?" "Dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" Peter denied him three times, with an oath, with an imprecation; Jesus turned toward him that ineffable look of sweetness, so well known by those who lived in His friendship. That was all His vengeance, His only reprimand, along with His pardon. If you desire to know what there was in those eyes so powerfully attractive, remember the effect that was produced upon Peter by one of His looks alone. This apostle denied Him with an oath; when the eye of Jesus rested upon him he immediately went out and shed bitter tears, although the Saviour had no longer that dignity nor beauty that had been admired in Him formerly; His livid face now bore the marks of the blows that He had received; the blood with which He was stained had disfigured and rendered Him unrecognizable; but the sweetness of His divinity showed itself in the accusing gaze of those eyes of burning love which He turned upon His apostle, so full of reproachful goodness; and he, opening his soul to repentance, shed torrents of tears. Even to the day of his martyrdom, his tears flowed when the memory of that look of Jesus returned to him.*

This sweetness agreed perfectly in Jesus with zeal and firmness. When He defended the interests of His Father and of truth, or reprehended hypo-

*Who shall ever say, who shall ever know how this look of Jesus and the tears of St. Peter have touched and saved souls! Sweet look of infinite mercy, which yet came even after the lapse of eighteen centuries to pierce and purify our ungrateful hearts; holy and sweet tears of repentance, which have extinguished and shall extinguish forever the flames of vice in this world and those of punishment in the world to come!—*Louis Veuillot.*

crites, He spoke with fire and energy; He testified a holy indignation and sometimes even displayed authority. But when there was question of none but Himself, He either forbore to refute the injuries and calumnies with which He was charged, or else He defended them with extreme moderation, evincing no change, either in His manner or words, but employing without any warmth such invincible reasons as left His enemies without rejoinder.

The sweetness proceeding from virtue does not resemble that of temperament. Souls naturally amiable are often weak, soft, indifferent, and even carry indifference to excess; but those who become amiable in imitation of Jesus are strong, firm, full of feeling, indulgent according to necessity, without failing in the rules of justice. The soul gentle by nature does not reprehend for fear of disturbing herself or of falling out of humor. The soul amiable through virtue reprehends with severity, but always with self-possession. The former dissimulates through timidity, the latter through a spirit of charity. The first often exposes herself to non-fulfilment of duty, the second always accomplishes it faithfully without any human respect. The one will manage others for her own interest, the other will do so solely for God and for the best.

In works of zeal and in the direction of souls, endeavor to imitate the ineffable sweetness of the Heart of Jesus, avoid violent methods, sharpness, harsh words, bitter reproaches or too light ones; do not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. See how Our Lord conducted Himself in regard to sinners in His own case. Did He suddenly launch His justice upon them? No; He sweetly set before the guilty soul its infidelities and invited it to repentance; if He chastised, it was al-

ways paternally and with mercy. In a word, He tried in every way to gain and change the will, and even until he gives himself up to final impenitence it is not permitted us to believe that God will entirely abandon the sinner without hope of pardon.

James and John prayed Him to cause fire to descend from heaven upon the Samaritan city that refused to receive them, but He answered them: "You know not of what spirit you are: the Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save." Notwithstanding the reproof of the apostles, He called to Him even the little children, who had been attracted by the charm of His person, and caressed them with the tenderness of a mother. Neither contradiction nor injustice ever draw from Him a single word of harshness. His enemies dared to say to Him, the God of holiness, "Thou hast a devil;" and what reply does He make to them? "I have not a devil: but I honor My Father, and you have dishonored Me."

You have not the glory of God and the salvation of your neighbor more at heart than had Jesus; and you can not employ more efficacious means than His. Act then, exteriorly, as He did interiorly. Let your advice, your invitations, your reproaches, be like His. Labor in union with His grace and therefore let that grace animate, direct, and sustain you in the exercise of your zeal. If we do not watch ourselves very closely, much of self will mingle with our zeal for God and for the good of souls. It is ourselves that we consider; it is ourselves whom we seek to please; it is not the reign of God, but our own that we would establish.

Happy the heart in which, as in a sanctuary, sweetness acts under the divine influence of faith,

hope, and charity! Fears and desires no longer trouble it; animal and carnal instincts are arrested in their development, or at least act only in the vivifying atmosphere of truth, of goodness, of beauty, by which they are surrounded and which impregnates and penetrates them.*

*From *The Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,* by the Rev. F. Huguet, Marist.

CHAPTER LXII.

Pontifical Decrees Concerning Daily Communion.

THE following are the original text and the official translation, as given in the London *Tablet*, of two decrees concerning daily communion, issued at Rome; one by the Sacred Congregation of the Council and the other by the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences and Holy Relics.

I.

Decretum Sacrae Congregationis Concilii

De Quotidiana SS. Eucharistiæ Sumptione.

Sacra Tridentina Synodus, perspectas habens ineffabiles quæ Christifidelibus obveniunt gratiarum divitias, sanctissimam Eucharistiam sumentibus (Sess. XXII., cap. vi.), ait: *Optaret quidem sacrosancta Synodus, ut in singulis Missis fideles adstantes non solum spirituali affectu, sed sacramentali etiam Eucharistiæ perceptione communicarent.* Quæ verba satis aperte produnt Ecclesiæ desider-

I.

Decree on Receiving Daily the Most Holy Eucharist.

The Council of Trent, having in view the unspeakable treasures of grace which are offered to the faithful who receive the Most Holy Eucharist, makes the following declaration: "The holy Synod would desire that at every Mass the faithful who are present should communicate not only spiritually, by way of internal affection, but sacramentally by the actual reception of the Eucharist" (Sess. 22, cap. 6). Which words declare plainly enough the

ium ut omnes Christifideles ille cœlesti convivio quotidie reficiantur, et pleniores ex eo sanctificationis hauriant effectus.

wish of the Church that all Christians should be daily nourished by this heavenly banquet, and should derive therefrom abundant fruit for their sanctification.

Huiusmodi vero vota cum illo cohærent desiderio quo Christus Dominus incensus hoc divinum Sacramentum instituit. Ipse enim nec semel nec obscure necessitatem innuit suæ carnis crebro manducandæ suique sanguinis bibendi, præsertim his verbis: *Hic est panis de cœlo descendens; non sicut manducaverunt patres vestri manna et mortui sunt: qui manducat hunc panem vivet in æternum* (Ioan., vi. 59). Ex qua comparatione cibi angelici cum pane et manna facile a discipulis intelligi poterat, quemadmodum pane corpus quotidie nutritur, et manna in deserto Hebræi quotidie refecti sunt, ita animam christianam cœlesti pane vesci posse quotidie ac recreari. Insuper quod

And this wish of the Council is in entire agreement with that desire wherewith Christ our Lord was inflamed when He instituted this divine Sacrament. For He Himself more than once, and in no ambiguous terms, pointed out the necessity of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, especially in these words: "This is the bread that came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live forever" (John vi. 59). Now, from this comparison of the food of angels with bread and with the manna, it was easily to be understood by His disciples that, as the body is daily nourished with bread, and as the Hebrews were daily

in oratione Dominica exposci iubet *panem nostrum quotidianum,* per id SS. Ecclesiæ Patres fere unanimes docent, non tam materialem panem, corporis escam, quam panem eucharisticum quotidie sumendum intelligi debere.

nourished with manna in the desert, so the Christian soul might daily partake of this heavenly bread and be refreshed thereby. Moreover, whereas, in the "Lord's Prayer," we are bidden to ask for "our daily bread," the holy Fathers of the Church all but unanimously teach that by these words must be understood, not so much that material bread which is the support of the body, as the Eucharistic bread which ought to be our daily food.

Desiderium vero Iesu Christi et Ecclesiæ ut omnes Christifideles quotidie ad sacrum convivium accedant, in eo potissimum est ut Christifideles, per sacramentum Deo coniuncti, robur inde capiant ad compescendam libidinem, ad leves culpas quæ quotidie occurrunt abluendas, et ad graviora peccata, quibus humana fragilitas est obnoxia, præcavenda: non autem præcipue ut Domini honori, ac veneration

Moreover, the desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church that all the faithful should daily approach the sacred banquet is directed chiefly to this end, that the faithful, being united to God by means of the Sacrament, may thence derive strength to resist their sensual passions, to cleanse themselves from the stains of daily faults, and to avoid these graver sins to which human frailty is liable; so that its primary

consulatur, nec ut sumentibus id quasi merces aut præmium sit suarum virtutum (S. August. Serm. LVII. in Matt. *De Orat. Dom., v.* 7). Unde S. Tridentinum Concilium Eucharistiam vocat *antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur* (Sess. XIII. cap. ii).

purpose is not that the honor and reverence due to Our Lord may be safeguarded, or that the Sacrament may serve as a reward of virtue bestowed on the recipients (St. Augustine, Serm. 57 in Matt., de Orat. Dom., n. 7). Hence the holy Council of Trent calls the Eucharist "the antidote whereby we are delivered from daily faults and preserved from deadly sins" (Sess. 13, cap. 2).

Hanc Dei voluntatem priores Christifideles probe intelligentes, quotidie ad hanc vitæ ac fortitudinis mensam accurrebant. *Erant perseverantes in doctrina Apostolorum et communicatione fractionis panis* (Act ii. 42). Quod sæculis posterioribus etiam factum esse, non sine magno perfectionis ac sanctitatis emolumento, Sancti Patres atque ecclesiastici Scriptores tradiderunt.

This desire on the part of God was so well understood by the first Christians, that they daily flocked to the holy table as to a source of life and strength. "They were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread" (Acts ii. 42). And that this practice was to continue into later ages, not without great fruit of holiness and perfection, the holy Fathers and ecclesiastical writers bear witness.

Defervescente interim pietate, ac potissimum postea Ianseniana lue undequaque grassante, disputari cœptum est de dispositionibus, quibus ad frequentem et quotidianam Communionem accedere oporteat, atque alii præ aliis maiores ac difficiliores, tanquam necessarias, expostularunt. Huiusmodi disceptationes id effecerunt, ut perpauci digni haberentur qui SS. Eucharistiam quotidie sumerent, et ex tam salutifero sacramento pleniores effectus haurirent; contentis ceteris eo refici aut semel in anno, aut singulis mensibus, vel unaquaque ad summum hebdomada. Quin etiam eo severitatis ventum est, ut a frequentanda cœlesti mensa integri cœtus excluderentur, uti mercatorum, aut eorum *qui essent matrimonio coniuncti.*

Nonnulli tamen in contrariam abierunt senten-

But when in later times piety grew cold, and more especially under the influence of the plague of Jansenism, disputes began to arise concerning the dispositions with which it was proper to receive communion frequently or daily; and writers vied with one another in imposing more and more stringent conditions as necessary to be fulfilled. The result of such disputes was that very few were considered worthy to communicate daily, and to derive from this most healing Sacrament its more abundant fruits; the rest being content to partake of it once a year, or once a month, or at the utmost weekly. Nay, to such a pitch was rigorism carried, that whole classes of persons were excluded from a frequent approach to the holy table; for instance, those engaged in trade, or even *those living in the state of matrimony.*

Others, however, went to the opposite extreme.

tiam. Hi, arbitrati Communionem quotidianam iure divino esse præceptam, ne dies ulla præteriret a Communione vacua, præter alia a probato Ecclesia usu aliena, etiam feria VI. in Parasceve Eucharistiam sumendam censebant, et ministrabant.

Under the persuasion that daily communion was a divine precept, and in order that no day might pass without the reception of the Sacrament, besides other practices contrary to the approved usage of the Church, they held that the Holy Eucharist ought to be received, and in fact administered it, even on Good Friday.

Ad hæc Sancta Sedes officio proprio non defuit. Nam per decretum huius Sacri Ordinis, quod incipit *Cum ad aures,* diei 12 mensis Februarii anni 1679, Innocentio Pp. XI. adprobante, errores huiusmodi damnavit et abusus compescuit, simul declarans omnes cuiusvis cœtus, mercatoribus atque coniugatis minime exceptis, ad Communionis frequentiam admitti posse, iuxta, singulorum pietatem et sui cuiusque Confessarii iudicium. Die vero 7 mensis Decembris anni 1690, per decretum *Sanctissimus Dominus noster* Alexan-

Under these circumstances the Holy See did not fail in its duty of vigilance. For, by a decree of this Sacred Congregation, which begins with the words *Cum ad aures,* issued on February 12, A.D. 1679, with the approbation of Innocent XI., it condemned these errors, and put a stop to such abuses; at the same time declaring that all the faithful of whatsoever class, merchants or tradesmen or married persons not excepted, might be admitted to frequent communion, according to the devotion of each one and the judg-

dri Pp. VIII, propositio Baii, purissimum Dei amorem absque ullius defectus mixtione requirens ab iis qui ad sacram mensam vellent accedere, proscripta fuit.

ment of his confessor. And on December 7, 1690, by the decree of Pope Alexander VIII., *Sanctissimus Dominus*, the proposition of Baius, postulating a perfectly pure love of God, without any admixture of defect, as requisite on the part of those who wished to approach the holy table, was condemned.

Virus tamen ianseniānum, quod bonorum etiam animos infecerat, sub specie honoris ac venerationis Eucharistiæ debiti, haud penitus evanuit. Quæstio de dispositionibus ad frequentandam recte ac legitime Communionem Sanctæ Sedis declarationibus supervixit; quo factum est ut nonnulli etiam boni nominis Theologi, raro et positis compluribus conditionibus, quotidianam Communionem fidelibus permitti posse censuerint.

Yet the poison of Jansenism, which, under the pretext of showing due honor and reverence to the Holy Eucharist, had infected the minds even of good men, did not entirely disappear. The controversy as to the dispositions requisite for the lawful and laudable frequentation of the Sacrament survived the declarations of the Holy See; so much so, indeed, that certain theologians of good repute judged that daily communion should be allowed to the faithful only in rare cases, and under many conditions.

Non defuerunt aliunde

On the other hand,

viri doctrina ac pietate præditi, qui faciliorem aditum præberent huic tam salubri Deoque accepto usui, docentes, auctoritate Patrum, nullum Ecclesiæ præceptum esse circa maiores dispositiones ad quotidianam, quam ad hebdomadariam aut menstruam Communionem; fructus vero uberiores longe fore ex quotidiana Communione, quam ex hebdomadaria aut menstrua.

there were not wanting men of learning and piety who more readily granted permission for this practice, so salutary and so pleasing to God. In accordance with the teaching of the Fathers, they maintained that there was no precept of the Church which prescribed more perfect dispositions in the case of daily than of weekly or monthly communion; while the good effects of daily communion would, they alleged, be far more abundant than those of communion received weekly or monthly.

Quæstiones super hac re diebus nostris adauctæ sunt et non sine acrimonia exagitatæ; quibus Confessariorum mentes atque fidelium conscientiæ perturbantur, cum christianæ pietatis ac fervoris haud mediocri detrimento. A viris idcirco præclarissimis ac animarum Pastoribus SSmo Dno Nostro Pio Pp. X enixæ preces porrectæ sunt, ut suprema

In our own day the controversy has been carried on with increased warmth, and not without bitterness, so that the minds of confessors and the consciences of the faithful have been disturbed, to the no small detriment of Christian piety and devotion. Accordingly, certain distinguished men, themselves pastors of souls, have urgently besought

Sua auctoritate quæstionem de dispositionibus ad Eucharistiam quotidie sumendam dirimere dignaretur; ita ut hæc saluberrima ac Dea acceptissima consuetudo non modo non minuatur inter fideles, sed potius augeatur et ubique propagetur, hisce diebus potissimum, quibus Religio ac fides catholica undequaque impetitur, ac vera Dei caritas et pietas haud parum desideratur. Sanctitas vero Sua, cum Ipsi maxime cordi sit, ea qua pollet solicitudine ac studio, ut christianus populus ad Sacrum convivium perquam frequenter et etiam quotidie advocetur eiusque fructibus amplissimis potiatur, quæstionem prædictam huic Sacro Ordini examinandam ac definiendam commisit.

his Holiness Pope Pius X. to deign to settle, by his supreme authority, the question concerning the dispositions requisite for daily communion; so that this usage, so salutary and so pleasing to God, might not only suffer no decrease among the faithful, but might rather be promoted and everywhere propagated; a thing most desirable in these days, when religion and the Catholic faith are attacked on all sides, and the true love of God and genuine piety are so lacking in many quarters. And his Holiness, being most earnestly desirous, out of his abundant solicitude and zeal, that the faithful should be invited to partake of the sacred banquet as often as possible, and even daily, and should profit to the utmost by its fruits, committed the aforesaid question to this Sacred Congregation, to be looked into and decided once for all (*definiendum*).

Sacra igitur Concilii Congregatio in plenariis Comitiis diei 16 mensis Dec. 1905 hanc rem ad examen accuratissimum revocavit, et rationibus hinc inde adductis sedula maturitate perpensis, ea quæ sequuntur statuit ac declaravit:

1° Communio frequens et quotidiana, utpote a Christo Domino et a Catholica Ecclesia optatissima, omnibus Christifidelibus cuiusvis ordinis aut conditionis pateat; ita ut nemo, qui in statu gratiæ sit et cum recta piaque mente ad S. Mensam accedat, prohiberi ab ea possit;

2° Recta autem mens in eo est, ut qui ad sacram mensam accedit non usui, aut vanitati, aut humanis rationibus indulgeat, sed Dei placito satisfacere velit, ei arctius caritate coniungi, ac divino illo pharmaco suis

Accordingly, the Sacred Congregation of the Council, in a plenary Session held on December 16, 1905, submitted the whole matter to a very careful scrutiny; and, after sedulously examining the reasons adduced on either side, determined and declared as follows:

1. Frequent and daily communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful, of whatever rank and condition of life; so that no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches the holy table with a right and devout intention, can lawfully be hindered therefrom.

2. A right intention consists in this: that he who approaches the holy table should do so, not out of routine, or vainglory, or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, or being more closely united with

infirmitatibus ac defectibus occurrere;

3° Etsi quam maxime expediat ut frequenti et quotidiana Communione utentes venialibus peccatis, saltem plene deliberatis, eorumque affectu sint expertes, sufficit nihilominus ut culpis mortalibus vacent, cum proposito se nunquam in posterum peccaturos: quo sincero animi proposito, fieri non potest quin quotidie communicantes a peccatis etiam venialibus ab eorumque affectu sensim se expediant;

4° Cum vero Sacramenta Novæ Legis, etsi effectum suum ex opere operato sortiantur, maiorem tamen producant effectum quo maiores dispositiones in iis suscipiendis adhibeantur, idcirco curandum est ut sedula ad sacram Communionem præpara-

Him by charity, and of seeking this divine remedy for his weaknesses and defects.

3. Although it is more expedient that those who communicate frequently or daily should be free from venial sins, especially from such as are fully deliberate, and from any affection thereto, nevertheless it is sufficient that they be free from mortal sin, with the purpose of never sinning mortally in future; and, if they have this sincere purpose, it is impossible but that daily communicants should gradually emancipate themselves from even venial sins, and from all affection thereto.

4. But whereas the sacraments of the New Law, though they take effect *ex opere operato*, nevertheless produce a greater effect in proportion as the dispositions of the recipient are better; therefore, care is to be taken that holy communion be preceded by seri-

tio antecedat, et congrua gratiarum actio inde sequatur, iuxta uniuscuiusque vires, conditionem ac officia;

5° Ut frequens et quotidiana Communio maiori prudentia fiat uberiorique merito augeatur, oportet ut Confessarii consilium intercedat. Caveant tamen Confessarii ne a frequenti seu quotidiana Communione quemquam avertant, qui in statu gratiæ reperiatur et recta mente accedat;

6° Cum autem perspicuum sit ex frequenti seu quotidiana S. Eucharistiæ sumptione unionem cum Christo augeri, spiritualem vitam uberius ali, animam virtutibus effusius instrui, et æternæ felicitatis pignus vel firmius sumenti donari, idcirco Parochi, Confessarii et concionatores, iuxta probatam Catechismi Romani doc-

ous preparation, and followed by a suitable thanksgiving according to each one's strength, circumstances, and duties.

5. That the practice of frequent and daily communion may be carried out with greater prudence and more abundant merit, the confessor's advice should be asked. Confessors, however, are to be careful not to dissuade any one (*ne quemquam avertant*) from frequent and daily communion, provided that he is in a state of grace and approaches with a right intention.

6. But since it is plain that, by the frequent or daily reception of the Holy Eucharist, union with Christ is fostered, the spiritual life more abundantly sustained, the soul more richly endowed with virtues, and an even surer pledge of everlasting happiness bestowed on the recipient, therefore parish priests, confessors and preachers

trinam (Part. II. cap. iv. q. lviii.), christianum populum ad hunc tam pium ac tam salutarem usum crebris admonitionibus multoque studio cohortentur;

—in accordance with the approved teaching of the Roman Catechism (Part ii. cap. 4, q. 58)—are frequently, and with great zeal, to exhort the faithful to this devout and salutary practice.

7° Communio frequens et quotidiana præsertim in religiosis Institutis cuiusvis generis promoveatur; pro quibus tamen firmum sit decretum *Quemadmodum* diei 17 mensis Decembris 1890 à S. Congr. Episcoporum et Regularium latum. Quam maxime quoque promoveatur in clericorum Seminariis, quorum alumni altaris inhiant servitio; item in aliis christianis omne genus ephebeis;

7. Frequent and daily communion is to be promoted especially in Religious Orders and Congregations of all kinds; with regard to which, however, the decree *Quemadmodum,* issued on December 17, 1890, by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars is to remain in force. It is also to be promoted especially in ecclesiastical seminaries, where students are preparing for the service of the altar; as also in all Christian establishments of whatever kind, for the training of youth.

8° Si quæ sint Instituta, sive votorum solemnium sive simplicium, quorum in regulis aut constitutionibus, vel etiam calendariis, Communiones aliquibus die-

8. In the case of religious institutes, whether of solemn or simple religious vows, in whose Rules, or Constitutions, or calendars, communion is assigned to certain fixed

bus affixæ et in iis iussæ reperiantur, hæ normæ tanquam mere *directivæ* non tamquam *præceptivæ* putandæ sunt. Præscriptus vero Communionum numerus haberi debet ut quid minimum pro Religiosorum pietate. Idcirco frequentior vel quotidianus accessus ad eucharisticam mensam libere eisdem patere semper debebit, iuxta normas superius in hoc decreto traditas. Ut autem omnes utriusque sexus religiosi huius decreti dispositiones rito cognoscere queant, singularum domorum moderatores curabunt, ut illud quotannis vernacula lingua in communi legatur intra Octavam festivitatis Corporis Christi;

9° Denique post promulgatum hoc Decretum omnes ecclesiastici scriptores a quavis contentiosa disputatione circa dispositiones ad frequentem et quotidianam Communionem abstineant.

days, such regulations are to be regarded as *directive* and not *preceptive*. In such cases the appointed number of communions should be regarded as a minimum, and not as setting a limit to the devotion of the Religious. Therefore, freedom of access to the Eucharistic table, whether more frequently or daily, must always be allowed them, according to the principles above laid down in this decree. And in order that all Religious of both sexes may clearly understand the provisions of this decree the Superior of each house is to see that it is read in community, in the vernacular, every year within the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi.

9. Finally, after the publication of this decree, all ecclesiastical writers are to cease from contentious controversies concerning the dispositions requisite for frequent and daily communion.

Relatis autem his omnibus ad SSmum D. N. Pium Pp. X. per infrascriptum S.C. Secretarium in audientia diei 17 mens. Dec. 1905, Sanctitas Sua hoc Emorum Patrum decretum ratum habuit, confirmavit atque edi iussit, contrariis quibuscumque minime obstantibus. Mandavit insuper ut mittatur ad omnes locorum Ordinarios et Prælatos Regulares, ad hoc ut illud cum suis Seminariis, Parochis, institutis religiosis et sacerdotibus respective communicent, et de executione eorum quæ in eo statuta sunt S. Sedem edoceant in suis relationibus de diœcesis seu instituti statu.

All this having been reported to His Holiness Pope Pius X. by the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation, in an audience held on December 17th, 1905, his Holiness ratified and confirmed the present decree, and ordered it to be published, anything to the contrary notwithstanding. He further ordered that it should be sent to all local ordinaries and regular prelates, to be communicated by them to their respective seminaries, parishes, religious institutes and priests; and that in their reports concerning the state of their respective dioceses or institutes, they should inform the Holy See concerning the execution of the matters therein determined.

Datum Romæ, die 20 Decembris 1905.

✠Vincentius Card., Episc. Prænestinus. *Præfectus.*

C. De Lai, *Secretarius.*

Given at Rome, the 20th day of December, 1905.

✠Vincent, *Card. Bishop of Palestrina, Prefect.*

Cajetan De Lai, *Sec.*

II.

Decretum Urbis et Orbis.

Sanctissimo Domino Nostro Pio Pp. X. vel maxime cordi est ut efficacius in dies propagetur; uberioresque edat virtutum omnium fructus laudabilis illa ac Deo valde accepta consuetudo, quæ fideles, in statu gratiæ rectaque cum mente, ad sacram Communionem quotidie sumendam accedant. Quamobrem supplicia plurimorum vota ab Eminentissimo Viro Cardinali Casimiro Gennari delata benigne libenterque excipiens, iis plane cunctis qui memoratam consuetudinem habent, aut inire exoptant, specialem merito gratiam elargiri statuit, Clemens porro Pp. XIII. f. r. per decretum huius sacri Ordinis, sub die 9 Decembris 1763 "omnibus christifidelibus, qui frequenti peccatorum confessione animum studentes expiare, semel saltem in hebdomada ad

II.

Decree on the Confession of Daily Communicants.

His Holiness Pope Pius X. most earnestly desires that the praiseworthy custom, so very acceptable to God, by which the faithful, in a state of grace and with a right intention, approach daily to holy communion, may become more general and may lead to more virtuous lives. For which reason, graciously and gladly receiving the petitions of many persons addressed to him through the Most Eminent Cardinal Casimir Gennari, he has justly determined to grant a special favor to all those who follow or desire to follow the practice aforesaid.

Pope Clement XIII., of happy memory, by a decree of this Sacred Congregation of December 9, 1763, granted to all the faithful, "who, striving to purify their souls by frequent confession of their sins, were

Sacramentum Pœnitentiæ accedere, nisi legitime impediantur, consueverunt, et nullius lethalis culpæ a se post prædictam ultimam confessionem commissæ sibi conscii sunt, indulsit, ut omnes et quascumque Indulgentias consequi possint, etiam sine actuali confessione quæ cœteroquin ad eas lucrandas necessaria esset. Nihil tamen innovando circa Indulgentias Iubilæi, tam ordinarii quam extraordinarii, aliasque ad instar Iubilæi concessas, pro quibus assequendis, sicut et alia opera iniuncta, ita et sacramentalis confessio tempore in earum concessione præscripto peragatur." Nunc vero Beatissimus Pater Pius X omnibus christifidelibus, qui in statu gratiæ et cum recta piaque mente quotidie Sancta de Altari libare consuescunt, quamvis semel aut iterum per hebdomadam a communione abstineant, præfato tamen f. r. accustomed, unless they were legitimately hindered, to approach the Sacrament of Penance at least once a week, and were not conscious of having committed any mortal sin since their last confession, the privilege of gaining all indulgences whatsoever, without the actual confession which otherwise would be necessary for gaining them; this concession, however, being in no wise applicable to the indulgences of a jubilee, whether ordinary or extraordinary, nor to other indulgences granted in like manner, for which, besides the other works enjoined, sacramental confession must be made within the time prescribed." Now, however, to all the faithful who, being in a state of grace and having a right and devout intention, are accustomed daily to receive the holy Sacrament of the Altar, even if they once or twice in a week omit their daily com-

Clementis Pp. XIII. indulto frui posse concedit, absque hebdomadariæ illius confessionis obligatione, quæ ceteroquin ad Indulgentias eo temporis intervallo decurrentes rite lucrandas necessaria extaret. Hanc insuper gratiam Eadem Sanctitas Sua futuris quoque temporibus valituram clementer declaravit. Contrariis quibuscumque non obstantibus.

Datum Romæ, e Secretaria S. Congregationis Indulgentiis Sacrisque Reliquiis præpositæ, die 14 Februarii 1906.

A. Card. Tripepi,
L. ✠ S. *Præfectus.*
D. Panici Archiep.
Laodicen,
Secretarius.

munion, our Most Holy Father Pius X. grants that they may avail themselves of the above-mentioned Indult of Clement XIII., of happy memory, without the weekly confession which in other circumstances is still of obligation for rightly gaining the indulgences that occur during the week. His Holiness, moreover, has graciously declared that this privilege will hold good in future times. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, the 14th day of February, 1906.

✠ A. Card. Tripepi,
Prefect.
D. Panici, Archbishop of Laodicea,
Secretary.

The present rescript has been shown at the Secretariate of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences and Holy Relics. In testimony whereof, etc.

Joseph M. Canon
Coselli, *Substitute.*

Given at Rome, at the aforesaid Secretariate, the 16th day of February, 1906.

PREGHIERA PER LA PROPAGAZIONE DEL PIO USO DELLA COMMUNIONE QUOTIDIANA.

O dolcissimo Gesù che veniste al mondo per dare a tutte le anime la vita della grazia Vostra, e che, per conservarla ed alimentarla in esse, voleste essere e la quotidiana medicina della loro quotidiana infermità ed il loro quotidiano sostentamento; umilmente Vi preghiamo, per il Vostro Cuore cosi ardente dell' amor nostro, a diffondere sopra di tutte il Vostro divino spirito, affinchè quelle che sventuramente sono in peccato mortale, convertendosi a Voi, riacquistino la vita della grazia perduta, e quelle che, per Vostro dono, vivono già di questa vita divina, ogni giorno, quando possono, si accostino devota-

PRAYER FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE PIOUS CUSTOM OF DAILY COMMUNION.

O sweet Jesus, who didst come into the world to give to all souls the life of Thy grace, and who, to preserve and nourish in them this life, hast wished to be their daily food and the daily remedy of their daily weakness, we humbly supplicate Thee, by Thy Heart so inflamed with love for us, to shed upon all souls Thy divine spirit, that they who, unhappily, are in mortal sin, may be converted to Thee and recover the life of grace that they have lost, and that they who, by Thy help, already live this divine life, may devoutly approach Thy holy table every day that they can; so that by means of daily com-

mente alla Vostra sacra mensa, onde per mezzo della quotidiana Comunione, ricevendo ogni giorno il contravveleno dei loro peccati veniali quotidiani, ed ogni giorno alimentando in sè la vita della grazia Vostra, e purificando cosi sempre più l'anima propria, giungano finalmente al conseguimento della vita con Voi beata. Amen.

munion, receiving daily the antidote of their daily venial sins, and feeding daily the life of Thy grace in their soul, and thus purifying themselves always more and more, they may, at last, arrive at the possession of the life of beatitude with Thee! Amen.

Three hundred days' indulgence every day.—*Pius X.*

"Why Art Thou Afraid?"

Blessed Emily Bicchieri, of the Order of Dominicans, had the most ardent love for the Blessed Sacrament. She was permitted to communicate thrice in the week and on all festivals, which in those days was unusually frequent. Emily's humility took alarm, and she resolved to abstain for a time from approaching the holy table. But Our Lord would not allow His spouse to fall into this dangerous delusion. He appeared to her radiant with celestial glory saying: "Beloved spouse, why art thou afraid to approach My banquet? Have I not prepared it on purpose that I might feed thee with My flesh and blood? Come without fear and look not so much at thine own vileness, but rather on the loving pity which moved Me to institute this Sacrament for the happiness of My creatures. Learn that *they who receive Me out of love please Me infinitely more than they who keep away from Me out of fear.*"

Reassured by this vision, the servant of God hungered more and more after the Bread of angels. One day she was detained at the bedside of a sick Sister and thus prevented from communicating with the rest. As soon as she was free she went to the choir and lovingly offered to Our Lord the great privation which she had suffered. An angel immediately appeared and brought her holy communion in the sight of all the Sisters.*

**Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.*

CHAPTER LXIII.

Communion for Religious.

AFTER the priest, sanctified by ordination to be the worthy minister of the daily Sacrifice and, consequently, to consummate it by daily communion, if there is another being destined and fitted by her vocation for the daily nourishment of the flesh of Jesus Christ, it is, assuredly, the Religious. She has for it a double need, created by the holy state that she has embraced: the need of His love, and that of her own indigence.

The profession of holy virginity and the benediction of the Pontiff have consecrated her the spouse of Jesus Christ. She has left the ranks of the laity and taken her place in the sacred hierarchy, forming therein the choir of virgins. She belongs no more to her family, and she can no longer dispose of her heart, for she has vowed it entirely and forever to her only Spouse. If love is the bond and the law of Christian marriage, in a far higher degree is it such in the transcendent union with the Son of God which the Religious contracts; for the Spouse whom she has chosen possesses every perfection without failing or defect, and He is so lovable that He may be literally loved to adoration. She can, then, live only to love Him; she can serve Him, labor and suffer only for love of Him. But love is kept alive by intimate relations with the beloved, by mutual presence, by the common life, by union of all kinds. It is perfectly satisfied only by the most entire, the closest possession. Give, then, to the spouse her Spouse.

Let her not only see Him, converse with Him, serve Him, but let her eat Him, let her possess Him in reality, since He is of such a nature that we can take Him as our nourishment. To feed her love, give her the Bread of divine charity, but give it as often as it is permitted, and that is every day. Is she who is not allowed to sit at the table of the Spouse for the daily repast a spouse? She is rather a stranger or a servant!

The heart of the Religious has need of Jesus, because it is to Him that she has given herself, because it is He whom she seeks, and whom nothing can ever replace. She makes the sacrifice of all the loved ones of her family, she renounces the joy of becoming at a new fireside the object of a love as sacred, and this for a Being superior to all others, and whom she can love with a higher love. It is not for the spiritual advantages found in the religious state, although so desirable, nor to satisfy the taste for solitude or the apostolate, nor to gain the gratitude of those that they benefit that so many confront its subjection, privations, and trials. It is to find Jesus, it is to possess and to secure God more surely. "In my bed by night I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and found Him not. I will arise and go about the city: in the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and I found Him not. The watchmen who keep the city found me. Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth? When I had a little passed by them, I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and I will not let Him go till I bring Him into my mother's house" (Cant. iii. 1), into the inmost sanctuary of my soul, to live with Him forever. Ah! give Him, then,

daily to her who can not live a single day without Him!

The Christ of the Eucharist is still more desirous to give Himself to the Religious than she is to receive Him,* for He loves her, lowly creature that she is, who has believed in Him, who has preferred Him to all else, and who wishes to live for Him alone. He loves her for her virginal purity and for the excellent gifts with which it has pleased Him to enrich her. His delights are to see and converse with her. "Arise, make haste," He says to her, "O My beautiful one, and come!" Come into the secret of intimacy. "Show Me thy face, let thy voice sound in My ears: for thy voice is sweet and thy face comely" (Cant. ii. 10).

Jesus loves the Religious, and He wishes to find in her compassion for His sufferings, consolation in His trials, a faithful friend amid the general forgetfulness of His own, a spouse who receives Him and gives Him a secure shelter from the hatred and ingratitude that pursue Him. "Open to Me, My beloved, My sister undefiled! My head is full of dew, and My locks of the drops of the night" (Cant. v. 2).

Give, then, to the Religious that which ungrateful men disdain or reject. Let her communicate every

*St. Chrysostom says that it is characteristic of the Eucharistic Christ to give Himself in order to satisfy the desire that He deigns to cherish for us: *"Necessarium est, dilectissimi, Mysteriorum discere miraculum, quodnam sit et quare sit datum et quæ hujus rei utilitas. Unum corpus efficimur. Ut itaque non tantum per caritatem hoc fiamus; verum etiam ipsa re in illam misceamur carnem, hoc namque per escam efficitur, quam largitus est nobis, volens ostendere desiderium quod erga nos habet. Propterea semetipsum nobis immiscuit, et corpus suum in nos contemperavit, ut unum quid simus, tanquam corpus capiti coaptatum: ardenter enim amantium hoc est"* (Hom. LXI., ad. pop. Antioch).

day in reparation for those that do not communicate, or that communicate unworthily.*

Let Jesus and His spouse possess each other without restriction, by every means possible here below, for their love increases daily by community of life, led in the service of the divine Father and of souls. The mutual penetration of heart to which prolonged intercourse leads; above all, the labors undertaken and the sufferings endured together contribute to love, and tend to close and blissful union. Favor this spread of daily communion, and let nothing on the part of the "friends of the Spouse"† —that is, His ministers—prevent His daily meeting with the spouse whose lily purity captivates Him: *"Ego dilecto meo et dilectus meus mihi, qui pascitur inter lilia":* "I to My beloved, and My beloved to Me, who feedeth among the lilies" (Cant. vi. 2).

*This is the thought of St. Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, the founder of the great family of religious laics, the Brothers of the Christian Schools. He urges his sons to communicate often instead of the people of the world, who excuse themselves from doing so, some alleging their business affairs, others the pleasures of the world which they do not wish to forsake. Jesus Christ tells us that it shall be taken from him who has not and be given to him who has; whence we may conclude, in respect to the Most Blessed Sacrament, that the graces prepared for those that turn their back on it will be given to those that have the happiness to approach it often. To profit by so great an advantage, hasten to communicate, go with faith. You will do very wrong by excusing yourself, since you have so many means for it and so great facility. Rest assured that, whatever excuse you may give to Jesus Christ to dispense yourself from communicating, He is not disposed to receive it (*Med. for the second Sunday after Pentecost*).

†*"Qui habet sponsam, sponsus est; amicus autem sponsi, qui stat et audit eum, gaudio gaudet propter vocem sponsi"* (John iii. 29).

We can never transcend the desires of Our Lord. On a certain Good Friday, when Blessed Margaret was manifesting to Him her ardent desire to receive Him, and the suffering that her inability to do so caused her, Jesus said to her: "My daughter, thy desire has so deeply penetrated My Heart that, if I had not already instituted the Sacrament of love, I would do so now for thee!"*

The Religious makes profession of tending to the perfection of the evangelical virtues, because they, more than any others, facilitate the perfect service of God by removing the chief obstacles to sanctity, and by more explicitly fitting the soul for that service which is the supreme end of creation. This renders her a being essentially religious, that is, vowed and devoted to God alone. Although all Christians make profession of the true religion, yet she assumes as her own proper name that of "Religious." But the most perfect individual act of religion toward God, that which makes the soul participate more abundantly in the public sacrifice of the Mass, that which more completely surrenders the soul to God in love stimulated, in purity refined, in fidelity ratified by renewed declarations, is, assuredly, holy communion. Let the Religious tend, then, to the perfection of the virtue of religion by daily communion, as she does to that of poverty and obedience by acts that lead thereto. If the perfection of communion consists, above all, in excellence of dispositions, that is in a great measure realized by zeal to receive as often as possible, in order not to lose a single particle of the gift of God: "*Particula boni doni non te prætereat*" —"Let not the part of a good gift overpass thee!" (Ecclus. xiv. 14).

The sublimity of her vocation creates for the Re-

**Vie et Œuvres*, t. I. p. 290.

ligious another need for daily communion, namely, her innate inability to fulfil it as it ought to be fulfilled without this daily help.

Her life is difficult. Entirely supernatural, it is established on the complete and universal subjugation of nature, not only of its depraved instincts and low satisfactions, but of those joys and aspirations which are lawful to him who, in the suite of Jesus Christ, has not made of these words the device of his life: *"Abneget semetipsum,"* "Let him deny himself!"

The constitutive virtues of the religious state are the perfect virtues of Christianity, so perfect that the wise Legislator, not daring to prescribe them to all, has made them the object of a counsel proposed only to the best. Now, these virtues the Religious is bound to practice daily more perfectly, never ceasing to reproduce the divine Model still more preeminently. She will never equal Him, but He incessantly urges her on with the words: *"Sequere me,"* "Follow Me!" To pause under the weight of fatigue at any point of this rude path, determined no longer to make the constant effort that continued progress demands, is for a Religious a formal and culpable infidelity.

And yet how greatly does the difficulty of making that effort increase as she advances in life! The true merit of the religious life does not consist in immolating one's self by the holy profession, which might appear like the so-much-desired recompense of the sacrifices already accomplished by entrance into religion, and sustained during the period more or less long of probation. Fervor, youth, health, enthusiasm, the novelty of obedience and illusions also —for those fiancées of Christ have not yet come in contact with the real difficulties of the religious life

—wreathe and inebriate the victim, transforming her sacrifice into a joyous feast. But when, after some years, she meets constantly the same austerities, the same obscure duties, the same chanting of the divine praises or adoration in the middle of the night, the same class-work, care of the sick or visiting the poor the whole day long, ah, then! When health begins to fail and strength grows weak, thus changing effort into suffering; with the evidences of the incurable weaknesses of her will and her natural repugnance to sacrifice, which have unveiled her vanished illusions; with the avowal she is forced to make of her little advancement in the reformation of her faults and the spiritual transformation of her nature; with the experience of miseries that astonish her in others and the painful relations they engender; with the small success of her devotedness among souls and the ungrateful contradictions of the world—both sources of so much bitterness—ah! it is then that, to renew each morning her profession with firm determination ever to stand loyally by all her engagements, is for the Religious truly meritorious and sometimes heroic!

Add to these difficulties inherent to their manner of life the few helps that Religious find along their path, and at times the absolute privation of them. To encourage them daily to renew the sacrifices of their religious profession, their compassionate Spouse daily renews under their eyes the oblation of the Sacrifice in which He immolates Himself to God for the salvation of mankind, and dies under a weight of sorrow, humiliation, and abandonment. To infuse into souls the strength of the same love, of the same immolation, our dear Lord offers to them generously His immolated flesh, His streaming blood, His devoted soul, His Heart torn by abandonment

and drowned in bitterness. He says to them: "Take ye and eat. Do this for a commemoration of Me! Abide in Me, remain in My love. He who abides in Me finds in My love the strength to observe all My commandments, as love for My Father has made Me fulfil all His desires. Remain in Me, remain in My love, for he that abideth in Me beareth much fruit, and without Me ye can do nothing. The world will hate you, will persecute you, will expel you from your churches and monasteries. But have confidence in Me. Rest in Me. I have conquered the world!"

O I beg of you, in pity for those beings so despoiled of everything, those souls of sacrifice and suffering, give them the daily Bread with which the valiant woman strengthened her servants early in the morning before sending them forth to their labor! *"De nocte surrexit deditque cibaria ancillis suis,"* "She hath risen in the night and given victuals to her maidens." That woman of equal prudence and goodness is the Church, whose intentions it is our capital duty to fulfil. Truly, it would be difficult to excuse from hard-heartedness and want of sagacity the priest that would exact of a Religious efforts and sacrifices which represent the perfect accomplishment of the duties of her state during the day without furnishing her with the help and strength of daily communion.

Since daily communion is so proper for their state and so necessary for them to attain perfection, preachers in their instructions, confessors in their direction, superioresses in their chapters to the community, mistresses of novices in their conferences, should earnestly aim at keeping alive in the hearts of the Religious sovereign devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament, the living bond of union with

Jesus Christ. Let them unceasingly rouse the desire of receiving it every day, habituating themselves to making this great act the principle and the end of their whole life. Daily prayer, the divine Office, the Rosary, pious reading, silence, manual labor, classes, care of the sick, obedience, the mortifications of the Rule, humiliations, sufferings, trials sent by divine Providence — all should take as distinctly as possible the character of preparation for or thanksgiving after holy communion. In this way souls abide in Jesus Christ and He abides in them. They will then, in a great measure, realize the ideal of the religious life, which Jesus alone led in its perfection—Jesus their Model, the true Religious of God—as He Himself expressed in these memorable words: "As I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me the same also shall live by Me." *

*By the Rev. A. Tesnière, S.S.S., D.D., *Communion for Religious.*

CHAPTER LXIV.

Commentary on the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Council (December 20, 1905) Regarding Daily Communion.

THE Decree declares: "No one in the state of grace approaching the holy table with a right and pious intention must be prevented from doing so: *'Ita ut nemo, qui in statu gratiæ sit et cum recta piaque mente ad S. Mensam accedat, prohiberi ab ipsa possit.'*"

It declares that, "although it is expedient for those that make frequent or *daily* communion to be free from venial sins, at least fully deliberate ones, and from affection to such sins, nevertheless, it suffices to be free from mortal sin and to have resolved never again to commit it: *'Sufficit nihilominus ut culpis mortalibus vacent, cum proposito se nunquam in posterum peccaturos.'*"

It forbids confessors to keep from *daily* communion any one in the state of grace who wishes to communicate with a good intention: *"Caveant confessarii ne a frequenti seu quotidiana communione quemquam avertant, qui in statu gratiæ reperiatur et recta mente accedat."*

I. In its exposition of the question, the Decree commences by referring to a well-known text of the Council of Trent: *"Optaret quidem sacrosancta Synodus ut in singulis Missis fideles adstantes non solum spirituali affectu, sed sacramentali etiam Eucharistiæ perceptione communicarent."* And it declares that "these words clearly express the desire of the Church to see all the faithful nourishing them-

selves daily with the celestial food, in order that they may draw from it fruits of sanctification more and more perfect." *

This paragraph determines the definitive interpretation of these celebrated words of the Council of Trent. The opponents of daily communion refuse to see therein the Church's expression of a true and sincere desire relative to daily communion, and the invitation given to all Christians to receive it every day if they can every day assist at Mass. *"Optaret,"* some say, "the Council would desire," if it were possible and fitting; but being certainly neither one nor the other, the Council very prudently contented itself with simply expressing a *conditional wish,* and not a *determined desire.* Others even pretend that these words of the Council, uttered to justify private Masses at which no one communicates, have no connection with the practice of communion, and that, consequently, an argument in favor of *daily* communion can not be found in them. But in our day, it can no longer be doubted that the Council of Trent, infallibly expressing the sentiments of the Church, "desires that all the faithful daily approach the heavenly banquet: *'Quæ verba satis aperte produnt Ecclesiæ desiderium ut omnes Christifideles illo cœlesti convivio quotidie reficiantur.'*"

II. Henceforth, it is impossible to deny that the doctrine of *daily* communion proposed to all Christians is founded on the fourth petition of the "Our Father"; nor can any one condemn, either logically or exegetically, those who interpret it chiefly in the Eucharistic sense, without, however, excluding from it the demand for corporal bread. "For," says the

*"*Quæ verba satis aperte produnt Ecclesiæ desiderium ut omnes Christifideles illo cœlesti convivio quotidie reficiantur, et pleniores ex eo sanctificationis hauriant effectus."*

Decree in its second paragraph, "what the Saviour orders us to ask in the 'Lord's Prayer' by the words: *'Panem nostrum quotidianum,'* is, according to the almost unanimous opinion of the Fathers, less the material bread than the daily reception of the Eucharistic Bread: *'Insuper, quod in Oratione Dominica exposci jubet Panem nostrum quotidianum, per id SS. Ecclesiæ Patres fere unanimes docent non materialem panem, corporis escam, quam panem eucharisticum quotidie sumendum intelligi debere.'"* We must, however, remark that the Decree does not condemn the Fathers and the Doctors who interpret the fourth petition by corporal bread. But it implicitly condemns those that exclude the possibility of a second literal sense referring to the Bread of the soul; and it affirms the lawfulness of this latter interpretation, which is the chief basis of the doctrine and practice of *daily* and *general* communion.

III. Another consideration, as touching as it is weighty, is that which declares that the wish of the Church in favor of daily communion for all the faithful is conformed to the desire with which the Saviour was possessed when He instituted the Eucharist, and which, indeed, led Him to do so: *"Hujusmodi vota cum illo cohærent desiderio quo Christus Dominus incensus hoc divinum Sacramentum instituit."*

Daily communion, consequently, offered to all, very far from being a chimerical dream or a piece of rash audacity, presents no danger to the honor of the Sacrament and the good of souls, and is the normal measure of the Gift its divine Institutor wishes to make to us. It is not offered to an élite portion of the flock, but to all who have need of His flesh, in order to live of His life and to secure to themselves its eternal possession. Now, all men

belong to this necessitous class. Jesus presents Himself not as a rare aliment to make a holiday feast more sumptuous, but as the daily bread necessary for the support of ordinary life, and which must in consequence be eaten every day. This distribution of the Bread of life is as large, abundant, and infinite as His love for man. It is the measure of His Heart: *"Quantum isti, tantum ille, nec sumptus minuitur!"* The desire of His Heart is to supply the daily needs of all men: needs of restoration, needs of conservation, needs of action, needs of spiritual fecundity and constant progress, even to the perfection and plenitude of eternal life.

In this pious recapitulation of the Saviour's desires, made by the Decree, we catch the sweet echo of His tender and burning words at the Last Supper: *"Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum":* "With desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you." These words were the immediate preparation for the gift of the Eucharist. We hear in them the vibrant echo of the order given by the Saviour at the time of the revelation of His Heart, when He complained "of receiving in return for all His eagerness to shower His benefits upon us, only coldness and rebuffs;" for He then said: "Above all shall you receive Me in communion as often as obedience will permit you." This was the means designated to console Him and render some return for His love.

The rule which ought henceforth to inspire all the distributers of the Bread of life is, then, daily communion for all whom they can render capable of it.

IV. To show how much the Saviour had at heart the daily and universal gift of His flesh and blood, the Sacred Congregation thus expresses itself: "It was not only once nor in ambiguous terms that the

divine Master taught the necessity of eating His flesh and of drinking His blood, as He did in these words: 'This is the Bread come down from heaven. It is not like the manna, which your fathers ate in the desert, but which did not prevent them from dying. He who eats this Bread will live forever.' By comparing the Bread of angels with material bread and with manna, the Saviour clearly inculcates upon His disciples that as the body is nourished daily with bread, and as the Hebrews were fed in the desert with the manna which fell every morning from the skies, so the Christian soul can daily nourish herself and repair her strength by partaking of the Bread of life: *'Quemadmodum pane corpus quotidie nutritur et manna in deserto Hebræi quotidie refecti sunt, ita animam christianam cœlesti pane vesci posse quotidie ac recreari.'"* This is the reply to those who pretend that nowhere in the Gospel is it taught that communion may be received every day, and that the argument drawn from the daily reception of the manna, as alleged by the Saviour, has no connection with daily communion. It also justifies those who see in the choice of bread—the daily nourishment of the greater part of the human race—the sacramental sign of the Eucharist, the manifestation of the divine Institutor's intention of offering it to all as their daily sustenance.

V. There are others who lose sight of the needs of human infirmity, so inclined to evil, and of the sincere condescension of the Saviour to satisfy them, and they look upon communion principally as a recompense of man's virtue. They, above all, make it a duty of conscience toward God. That, certainly, ought not to be neglected; but it is, nevertheless, not the chief purpose aimed at by the

Saviour in the gift of communion. Let us hearken to these words: "The desire of Jesus Christ and the Church to see all the faithful daily approaching the celestial banquet aims, above all, at this result; namely, that the faithful, uniting themselves to God by the Sacrament, may draw from it the strength to moderate their evil inclinations, efface their daily venial faults, and shun the mortal falls to which human fragility is exposed. It is, then, not principally to procure the honor and glory of God, nor is it as a reward of virtue that the Holy Eucharist is offered to the communicant." The Council of Trent calls the Eucharist, also, "the antidote which delivers from daily faults and preserves from mortal sins." *

It is evident that this imperfect idea of Christ's intention in the institution of communion has engendered all the severity imposed upon souls in permitting them frequent communion. If it was His own honor that He expected above all else, could souls ever be sufficiently pure, sufficiently virtuous, sufficiently recollected to receive Jesus Christ in communion? Could they ever make sufficient efforts, gain sufficient victories, merit sufficiently the reward of the Eucharist, the pledge and foretaste of eternal beatitude, if it were this motive of *reward* that led them above all considerations to the holy table? Oh, no! mercifully replies the Sovereign Pastor, who has penetrated the true meaning of the Heart of Jesus Christ. The first property of communion is to be a support against weakness, a preservative and remedy against human infirmity: *"Sacramenta propter homines."* The Bread of angels, in becoming the Bread of viators, is adapted to their miseries. If in giving it

*S. Aug. Serm. LVII. in Matt. De Orat. Dom. V. 7.

Christ can become indifferent to His own honor, He is satisfied with the state of grace and an act of piety as an immediate preparation for receiving. If the heavenly bread is not meant as a recompense of efforts to receive it well; if it is sufficient to reward the most heroic far above what they deserve, Jesus disdains not to abase Himself to the most lowly, in order to encourage them. The sacred Host contains the same Christ who counseled the most sublime detachment, and who lauded the farthing of the poor widow. It contains and it gives the great King who prepares a magnificent marriage feast for His Son. Inviting all the poor and miserable of the highways and byways to take part in it, He asks them, in order to show themselves worthy of the honor done them, merely to cover their poverty with the nuptial garment. Lastly, it contains and bestows the supreme Remunerator, who decrees beatitude to the martyrs come out victorious from persecution for justice' sake, but who does not deprive of it those who have given a morsel of bread or a cup of water to the needy, a word of consolation to the afflicted.

VI. The Decree says, moreover, that the custom of daily communion declined only with the relaxation of fervor, and that it was under the lamentable influence of this abasement of souls, dragged down by Jansenism to its own level, that the dispositions for frequent and daily communion began to be discussed. These dispositions were made more and more difficult and declared necessary, so that this pretended increase of respect for communion was born in reality of a diminution of piety toward the Holy Eucharist. By diminishing the frequency of holy communion, they, in fact, dissolved the vigor of the Christian life; they lived less of the life of

Jesus Christ; they did in reality return toward paganism in their morals. It prepared the way for the invasion of the sensualism of the eighteenth century and of the naturalism of the nineteenth, in which the Vatican Council beheld concentrated all the definitive heresies and apostasies of the Christian world. How, in effect, could it escape such a degree of decay in faith when, under the pretext of that false respect, stigmatized by St. Cyril of Alexandria as "diabolical piety," the Jansenistic school had so far "pushed its severity as to exclude entire classes of the faithful, such as business men and married people," that is, the immense majority of Christians: *"Quin etiam eo severitatis ventum est, ut a frequentanda cœlesti mensa integri cœtus excluderentur, uti mercatorum, aut eorum qui essent matrimonio conjuncti."*

VII. "Frequent and daily communion, inasmuch as it is ardently desired by Our Lord and by the Catholic Church, ought to be accessible to all Christians of every rank and condition; so that no one approaching the holy table in a state of grace and with an upright and pious intention can be turned away."

This first declaration is the chief one, and all others are but consequences or explanations of it. It lays down clearly two general principles: the first, founded upon the desires of Christ and the Church, declares the lawfulness of communion, not only frequent, but daily, for all the faithful of every condition; the second determines the two special dispositions necessary and sufficient for it.

Daily communion received by all Christians is conformed to the formal intention of Jesus Christ and the Church: *"Utpote a Christo Domino et a Catholica Ecclesia optatissima."* Jesus and the Church ardently desire to see it practiced by all

their children. They have not decreed the law under pain of grave sin, because they do not wish this most benevolent offer of eternal life to be for men absorbed in the things of earth an occasion of multiplied death. But it is certain that, when souls fulfil this desire, when they communicate every day, they are entering into the intentions and satisfying the wishes of Jesus and the Church: *"Optatissima."*

VIII. The only conditions required and sufficient to render lawful the call of the pastors and the participation of all Christians in daily communion, to take away all danger to the honor of the divine Bread and the good of souls, and, on the contrary, to make it profitable to both the one and the other, are "that the communicant should be in the state of grace, and should approach the holy table with an upright and pious intention. No one presenting himself with these two dispositions can ever be sent away: *'Ita ut nemo, qui in statu gratiæ sit et cum recta piaque mente ad S. Mensam accedat, prohiberi ab ea possit.'"*

Behold a rule which contrasts strangely with those that have prevailed almost everywhere up to the present. To be admitted to daily communion, it suffices to be in the state of grace, that is, actually free from the stain of mortal sin; and to be led to the holy table by an upright and pious intention. "What! so few dispositions exacted for the immense honor, the precious privilege of daily communion?" will exclaim with astonishment they who esteem numberless dispositions of propriety necessary for frequent communion. We answer, Yes!

But let us not make a mistake!

The state of grace is not so small a thing, not a mere resource, a common state tolerated, perhaps, in little and ordinary souls, but unworthy of elevated

souls alone fit for daily communion. The state of grace is the very foundation of the Christian life, a divine gift, which no one can ever merit, and which Jesus acquired by His blood. It is the supernatural soil, fertile and vivifying, in which all divine virtues germinate and take root. "The state of grace," says the Council of Trent, "consists not merely in exemption from sin, but in the renewal and sanctification of the interior man by the free reception of grace and divine gifts. From unjust, man becomes just by the state of grace; from an enemy he becomes a friend, and the heir by hope of eternal life" (*De Justificatione,* Ch. vi.). "At the moment of justification," says the Council again, "through the merits of the Passion of Jesus, the love of God is shed into the heart of the sinner and remains there. Man is ingrafted on Christ, through whom he receives the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; for faith, if not completed by hope and charity, would be powerless to unite perfectly to Christ, and to make of the justified His living member" (Ch. vii.). The state of grace renders a man participant of the divine nature, makes him a child of God by adoption, a member of Jesus Christ, a living branch of the vine, of which Jesus is the trunk. By the state of grace, man lives in Jesus and in God. He loves God and God loves him. He abides in His love, and he is vitally united to Him, living of His life by the fundamental and stable communication of sanctifying grace, which the uninterrupted presence of the Holy Spirit pours incessantly into his soul, and by the effusions that come to him through the channels of the Sacraments. When he acts, all his naturally good works become holy and meritorious for eternal life by virtue of the supernatural elevation communicated to them by the foundation of sanctifying grace.

Now the state of grace is of such a nature that it can be easily lost by mortal sin, though it can not be substantially diminished nor altered by venial sin. In every baptized or justified soul exempt from mortal sin, it subsists and remains in its substantial integrity, however numerous may be the venial sins, even the most deliberate, or however the affections may cling to them. No doubt, such faults and, above all, such affections chill the fervor of divine charity, between which and the state of grace there is but a shade of difference. No doubt they retard the activity of the supernatural life, which is involved in the state of grace. But they do not diminish the substance of sanctifying grace; they merely enervate or enfeeble its powers of action. Without doubt, again, it ordinarily happens that, under the number and relative gravity of venial sins, the will inclines to fall into mortal sin by a new and more serious weakness. But inasmuch as mortal sin has not destroyed it, by severing the bond of love which united the soul to God and conducted into it the uninterrupted flow of the divine life, the state of grace remains intact in the soul and sustains its fundamental life and holiness.

What hindrance, therefore, can prevent this branch, already attached to the vine and vivified by its sap, from aspiring to new increase by communion? What can prevent this member, united to Jesus, its Head, living by His life, from imbibing new life from communion? How could this Father feel repugnance to nourishing the child of His own blood, since it lives of His life and bears resemblance to Him in all its features, though veiled under the dust of venial sin?

Evidently, the difficulties that the majority of theologians of the last three centuries have in ac-

cepting as sufficient for daily communion the habitual disposition of the state of grace alone, come from their not making enough account of the power and greatness of this state. The robe of innocence, washed in the blood of Christ, they regard at most as an undergarment in which it would not be proper or honorable to present one's self; and so, of necessity, a more sumptuous one, of perfect purity and ornamented with the precious embroidery of the virtues, must be provided.

He who reasons thus, forgets two things: that these more excellent dispositions are, in fact, the portion of only some chosen souls; and that Christ wishes to be the daily nourishment of all. He forgets, also, that, by the will of its divine Author, it is in the very nature of communion to efface venial sins; and that it is losing sight of this most opportune and beneficent efficacy, to permit communion to those only who, by other means, have been previously purified. This would be to subordinate the power of the Sacrament to that of human action and, in fact, to deprive of the great fruit of an increase of sanctifying grace, *ex opere operato*, the most important of all, a multitude of souls found incapable of the most perfect dispositions. And the Church, as a mother, alarmed at the loss of supernatural life sustained by so many souls unable to preserve it without the help of daily communion, says to all her ministers of the Bread of life: No! No! do not reject from the daily participation in the Eucharist any of those who are in the state of grace! Not only they who have been long in that state and who ordinarily persevere therein, but all those that are actually in it at the moment they present themselves to communicate, were they returned to it only one instant previously by the remission of their sins! And

if, fallen back again into mortal sin, they again present themselves, and you judge them capable of absolution, because their repentance and their firm purpose of amendment seem to you sincere, urge them again to the holy table; for they have again put on the wedding-garment, and they have need, in order not to fall again, of receiving the Bread of life!

He who is alive has the right and duty to preserve his life. For the communion of to-morrow, the same disposition is necessary as for that of to-day, and nothing more. Why should the Paschal or the monthly communion be given at so cheap a rate, while more frequent communions cost so much more? Each one of them contains the same Christ, whom it has pleased to become the necessary food of all His members, from whom He exacts in return nothing more than that they should be living in the state of grace. No one has a right to interfere in the constitution of the sacramental economy in order to modify Christ's institutions. There is something rash in showing one's self more difficult than He. O my priests, says the Church, do not keep away from daily communion any of those that approach thereto clothed with the state of grace: *"Ut nemo qui in statu gratiæ sit prohiberi possit!"*

"St. Philip Neri, who devoted his life to the sanctification of the young men of Rome, and whose testimony comes to us with the double weight of sanctity and exceptional experience, used to say that frequent communion, together with devotion to the Blessed Virgin, were not only the best, but that they were the only means of preserving the faith and morals of young men and of helping them to rise again after their falls. How he carried out this principle in practice will be seen by the following

example: A student came to him one day and begged his assistance in ridding himself of some evil habits to which he had long been a slave. The saint encouraged the young man, gave him good advice, and after hearing his confession absolved him and sent him away happy, with the permission to receive holy communion on the morrow. 'If you should be so unfortunate as to fall again, come and see me at once,' he added, 'and in the meantime put your entire confidence in God.' The next evening the youth returned to the saint to confess a relapse. Philip treated him exactly as before, encouraged him to struggle bravely, absolved him and allowed him to approach the holy table the next day. The student, harassed by the tyranny of the evil habit, and yet eager to return to God, drew from this compassionate direction and from the reception of the Holy Eucharist, such energy and constancy of purpose that for thirteen days in succession he returned daily to the saint's confessional. Finally, charity carried the day, and Our Lord gained a new recruit. The young man made such rapid strides in the way of perfection that St. Philip soon judged him worthy of aspiring to the priesthood. He eventually became an Oratorian, edified all Rome by his zeal and his virtues, and died still young in the odor of sanctity. To the end of his life he never wearied of telling the story of his conversion in order to encourage sinners and to make young men understand that their only hope lay in frequent communion." *

IX. The state of grace is the habitual disposition, the fundamental disposition for communion. But as every rational act should have an actual disposition or an intention, that is, an immediate conformity

*Anecdote from *The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament*, inserted by the Editor.

of the soul and its powers, which conformity varies according to the nature of the acts to be accomplished, the Decree exacts of every communicant the joining to the state of grace "an upright and pious intention:" *"Et cum recta piaque mente accedat."*

In what this right and pious intention consists, the second Rule informs us in these terms: "In this, that the communicant in communicating does not do so through habit, vanity, or purely human motives, but from the will to please God, to unite himself more closely to Him by charity, and to apply this divine Remedy to his infirmities and defects."

Hence "a right intention," in order to perform with the supernatural rectitude (demanded by a good act) a serious act, which involves the conscience, and of which God will be the judge: *Mens recta.* The rectitude of an action consists in performing it with a view conformed to its nature and end, in harmonizing the will with the excellence and the end of the work we are accomplishing. Rectitude, then, excludes voluntary insincerity, evasion, hypocrisy. It excludes everything that could vitiate an act in its nature, means, or results. Thus, they would fail in rectitude by communicating through habit, or through the influence of an established custom, not to be remarked and blamed, perhaps, for failing to do so: *"Usui non indulgeat."* To do a thing through pure habit is to follow a routine, to yield to some pressure from without, to conform to a fashion, to allow one's self to be influenced instead of resolving for one's self. It is to be wanting in good-will, I mean the upright and sincere will which God, who looks at the heart, desires to find in those that approach Him: *"Mens recta in eo est ut . . . usui non indulgeat."*

It is the same with all "the other human motives which might lead one to communicate: '*Aut humanis rationibus.*'" Such, for example, as interest or fear: fear to displease by not communicating; interest to retain some position by communicating. Again, some human motive having a creature in view, thus turning the supernatural act of communion from the necessary end to which by its nature it is borne, namely, the glory of God and the eternal goodness of the soul. Such a motive deviates from supernatural rectitude and can not legitimately dispose the soul for the act of communion. A person influenced by such reasons only, even were he in the state of grace, can not be admitted to the holy table: "*Humanis rationibus non indulgeat.*"

Having enumerated the causes which might falsify the intention of the communicant, the Sacred Congregation indicates some of those that would render it "surely right and pious." Let them approach the holy table "to please God: '*Ut Dei placito satisfacere velit;*'" to satisfy the goodness of the divine Father who desires to give us His celestial Bread every day, since He orders us to petition for it; to content the merciful desires of the Heart of Jesus Christ, of which we are certain; to perform a religious act which of its nature honors God and, consequently, is agreeable to Him: "*Ut Dei placito satisfacere velit.*" Let them approach the Sacrament which, by institution, augments divine charity in the soul by uniting it more closely to God: "*Et ei arctius caritate conjungi.*" Nothing is more advantageous to the soul than to love God, and no limit being put to the progress of this love we can but praise those that desire to receive the Eucharist daily, in order to increase daily in their soul, as long as life lasts, the love of our good God. Lastly, let

them approach who want to find "in this divine Remedy the strength to resist their weakness and defects: *'Ac divino illo pharmaco suis infirmitatibus ac defectibus occurrere.'"* This last intention may be, perhaps, less noble, less perfect than the preceding in the reception of daily communion; but how necessary it is for all, however pious and religious they may be! Sinners by our origin, deeply agitated and disorganized, constantly solicited by the seduction of created goods to enjoy a larger share of them than is reasonable, we have perpetually to guard ourselves, to rise from our falls, or to purify ourselves. "Our faults are daily," says St. Ambrose; "let the remedy, also, be daily." Again, God is pleased that we should daily purify ourselves by His flesh and His blood, for "His will is our sanctification." St. James says, "To keep one's self unspotted from this world, is religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father." This reason alone, namely, preservation from sin and the cure of its remains, the correction of defects and the repression of the passions, the help afforded the weakness and incurable misery of a nature radically vitiated, is sufficient to justify daily communion. Such an intention is "right and pious." Of this there can be no doubt. Let him, then, who, without excluding the more elevated intentions of pleasing God and of increasing His love in his heart, feels urged most of all by his own misery to recur to communion, approach thereto daily. That is an intention very *right* and very *pious,* which honors the blessed Eucharist as the Remedy *par excellence,* by applying it to spiritual evils as their cure, for so willed the divine Institutor when He said of it: "Take ye all, and eat. This is My body. . . . Drink ye all of this. For this is My blood . . . shed

for many unto remission of sins. *In remissionem peccatorum!"*

X. By restricting to the simple state of grace and a religious intention the dispositions necessary and sufficient for daily communion, does not the Sacred Congregation suppose dispositions better and purity more perfect than can be brought to it? No, certainly not, and the third Rule is formulated, as follows: "Although it is very advantageous for those that make frequent or daily communion to be free from venial, at least fully deliberate sins and from all affection to such sins, yet it suffices for them to be exempt from mortal transgressions and have the resolution to commit them no more. Possessed of this firm purpose, it is impossible for them to communicate daily and not free themselves by degrees even from venial sins and affection to them."

Thus the Sacred Congregation recognizes the great advantages of being purified from venial sins before communicating: *"Maxime expediat ut frequenti et quotidiana communione utentes, venialibus sint expertes."* This most perfect purity opens the soul more freely to the coming of Christ. It disposes it better for union with Him by love, inasmuch as it proves a closer conformity of man's will with that of God; and there is no doubt that the divine Spouse, who "feeds among the lilies," delights in manifesting Himself to the pure soul, and making it taste the heavenly consolations of which He is the inexhaustible source.

That it may not be thought that purity absolutely perfect, free even from faults of surprise and weakness, is easily attainable and a state accessible to many, the Sacred Congregation is satisfied with holding up as very advantageous a state of purity less elevated, less rare, namely, "exemption from de-

liberate venial sins and affection to them: *'Venialibus peccatis, saltem plene deliberatis, eorumque affectu sint expertes.'"* This state is, indeed, easier, although it exacts a great spirit of sacrifice and careful vigilance over self to reach it and to maintain one's self in it. By this most indulgent limitation of the desirable dispositions, the Decree manifests its absolute reprobation of the proposition of Baius, already condemned by Pope Alexander VIII., a proposition which calls for "the purest love of God with no mixture of imperfection in those who desire to communicate." To exact freedom from venial faults, even from those committed without full deliberation and affection, as not a few of the adversaries of daily communion have done, was not, indeed, to adhere formally to the condemned doctrine, though it came very dangerously near it, since the difference between freedom from every venial sin, even indeliberate, and pure love without imperfection, is not very pronounced.

Although exemption from deliberate venial sins be very advantageous, and may, perhaps, be expected from souls of very good will; although it be very well, also, to create it and cultivate it carefully, yet such exemption is not necessary even for daily communion. "It suffices to be free from mortal sin with the firm purpose not to commit it again: *'Sufficit nihilominus ut culpis mortalibus vacent, cum proposito se nunquam in posterum peccaturos.'"* This firm purpose is not a new disposition added by the Decree to that of the *state of grace* and the *right intention.* It forms implicitly a part of the state of grace which, in the adult, is attachment to God above all else and, consequently, the resolution of never resisting His will in any grave affair; for that would be to separate from Him by the revolt of mortal sin.

Now, "this firm purpose, if sincere and sustained by daily communion, can not fail sooner or later to have the happy result of freeing the soul from venial faults and all affection to them: *'Quo sincero animi proposito, fieri non potest quin quotidie communicantes a peccatis etiam venialibus, ab eorumque affectu sensim se expediant.'"* The opponents of daily communion hold that only they can be admitted who no longer commit deliberate venial sins and who have overcome every attachment, every affection to such sins. Even to those that possess these two conditions, they are rather reserved in granting frequent communion, which shows that they expect this double result much more from man's own efforts than from the grace of the Sacrament, and that they strangely exaggerate the conditions necessary for its reception. The Sacred Congregation declares that habitual venial sin is never an obstacle to communion, even daily, and that it is one of the properties of communion to efface stains and to destroy bonds, but on condition that against those faults which happen, sad to say, daily, we fortify ourselves every day with "this antidote which frees us from daily faults," according to the word already quoted of the Council of Trent: *"Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis."* *

In connection with this commentary it is quite in order to reflect upon the following words of Mgr. John S. Vaughan, in *Thoughts for All Times:* "The desire on the part of Our Lord to be wherever a human heart beats, or an adoring soul lives, though a most astounding effect of divine charity, is surpassed by the institution of the Sacrament of holy communion. The great Lover of

*The foregoing is taken from an article by Père Tesnière, published in *The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.*

souls would be not only present, not only in the closest proximity, but in actual union with each soul His hands have made. 'My flesh is meat indeed, My blood is drink indeed. Who eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him' (John vi. 57). He truly and actually enters our souls; occupies our hearts; reposes within us as within a living tabernacle, and so possesses our very being, when we place no obstacle in His way, that we may justly exclaim with St. Paul: 'I live; now not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii. 20). There in the very center of our soul He holds His court. 'My delight is to be with the children of men' (Prov. viii. 31). 'As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me' (John vi. 58).

"It is impossible for any one to think seriously of what holy communion really is, without feeling, if I may so express myself, bewildered, overwhelmed, and almost confounded by the undreamed-of and wholly unparalleled depths of divine condescension it supposes. It is so profound and unfathomable a mystery, it indicates a charity so measureless and infinite, that one feels almost as if one dare not think of it, lest the thought should crush and paralyze one's heart and senses. A kind of spiritual tremor, or vertigo, seems to seize upon one, such as is experienced in the physical order on looking fearfully and fitfully from the beetling edge of some gigantic height, down a measureless fall of sheer precipitous rock.

"There is nothing on earth that can compare with this union. No love less than infinite love could have devised or contrived half so beauteous or half so sumptuous a banquet for the weary pilgrim,

wending his way along the dusty road of life to the great city of God.

"Further than this we can not go, at least not in this life. There is nothing between this and the beatific vision itself. In the adorable Eucharist, we have all that we shall ever have in heaven. When the consecrated particle rests upon our tongue, we hold within us all that constitutes the essential bliss of the saints in eternal glory. The difference is merely that we fail to realize it. We possess it, but without being able to estimate what we possess. If by some stupendous miracle our eyes were suddenly opened, we should find that we were really in heaven; or rather, that heaven itself had come down upon us and entered into our soul. How countless are the ways in which God proves His love for men!"

CHAPTER LXV.

Sanctifying Grace.

SANCTIFYING grace, otherwise called the state of grace, is a certain state in which I was put by baptism — in which, doing good works, I merit heaven—which grows upon me by every such good work done, and by every Sacrament worthily received—a state from which I fall by mortal sin, and which I recover by repentance—a state, dying in which I am sure to go to heaven, and dying out of which I am sure to be lost eternally. Sanctifying grace then is a very important thing: it is, in fact, the most important thing in life to a Christian. His lifelong occupation should be to guard and increase this treasure. To guard it, as his Saviour bids him: "Watch ye therefore, because ye know not the day nor the hour: take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is when the lord of the house cometh, lest coming on a sudden he find you sleeping; and what I say to you I say to all, Watch" (Matt. xxv. 13; Mark xiii. 33-37). To increase it, by good works and Sacraments, as his Saviour again bids him: "Traffic till I come" (Luke xix. 13). Our Lord speaks of "watching" as servants sit up for their master, not knowing at what hour of the night, early or late, he may be coming back: neither do I know when Our Lord will come again to judge the earth, or, what is more important for me personally, when I shall die and appear before His judgment seat, whether now in the spring-time of my years or after a long life. However long be my life, there is not a day of it on which I may not die unexpectedly. And to die out of the state of grace means

for me to go down into the hell of fire. Therefore my Saviour's warning, "I say to you, watch," means, as it is addressed to me, "Live in the state of grace." But I can not live in the state of grace without growing in it, and increasing the store of sanctifying grace already in me. I must do good works, and every good work in the state of grace merits an increase of sanctifying grace, and consequently an increase of glory in heaven. Now everything I do from morning to night may be and ought to be a good work. Whatever I do, ought to be a right and proper thing for me to be doing at the time. If it is a right and proper thing to do, it is a good work. One way or another, I am to imitate my Saviour, of whom it is written that as He "grew in age," or stature, He likewise grew in "grace before God." Thus, too, I am to grow in the likeness of my immaculate Mother, "full of grace" (Luke i. 28; ii. 40, 52; John i. 14).

Sanctifying grace is our comfort in the ills of life. Troubles come in abundance from without, but not the least of man's troubles is his own unsatisfactory self: as in navigating a rough sea in some crazy craft, the waves are heavy, but your chief annoyance is that they reveal so many weak points in your vessel. It might have been constructed to behave so very much better! Few people, perhaps, are dissatisfied with their own judgment: but who is satisfied with his own constancy, his own self-control? What room for self-satisfaction is left when one reflects on the scrutinizing gaze of God? What a poor appearance I must present to the eyes of my Maker! Our good resolutions fail, our fits of piety pass off, faults that we thought overcome re-assert themselves, our weaknesses are apparent on every possible occasion: we say to ourselves in the bitter-

ness of disappointment, "Oh, that I were better!" "Can I ever be good?" We cry with St. Bernard: "There is nothing seated in me, but all is in commotion, all things sway to and fro, my whole being tosses like the sea." Yes, there is one thing that with a little fidelity and care will remain constant within me; and that is the best thing of all, the sanctifying grace of God. Sanctifying grace is never absent from us except when we are in mortal sin. More than that, whenever it is in the soul at all, it is there in all the fulness that it has ever attained to in that soul. Grace does not lend itself to figures, but we may use figures to aid our understanding of this matter. As a man, once grown to six feet, will never again be reduced to a stature of four feet or five, but wherever he is, there is six feet of him; so the sanctifying grace that in a particular soul could once be represented by sixty, can never be represented in that soul by a lower number, say forty-eight. It may drop down to zero, and be all lost, but if it comes back again, it comes back in a quantity at least up to sixty. Sanctifying grace is not diminished by venial sin. Venial sins of great perversity and wilfulness endanger sanctifying grace, inasmuch as they lead to mortal sin; but though they endanger it they do not diminish it. While there is any of it at all in the soul, there is all that ever was there: and if, after being lost, it comes back again, there comes back all that ever was there. The frailty of the "earthen vessel" in which it is contained does not make the "treasure" less (2 Cor. iv. 7). There are very strange people in the state of grace—here "a lazy, ragged, filthy, story-telling beggar-woman," as Cardinal Newman says (*Apologia*, p. 248), there a lot of idle boys, mischievous and giddy. If they were to die as they

are now, they would be punished in purgatory for their idleness, but in the end they would go to heaven —they have a right to go there. Even now, with all their faults, they are God's most dear children, His right trusty and well-beloved sons. All this is meant, not to encourage me in my faults, but to save me from the discouragement that comes of my efforts at improvement seeming to lead to so little. It is not a little thing if, with all my imperfections on my head, I am still in the state of grace.

However, we must behave as becomes that state, and not of set purpose behave unbecomingly even in little things: otherwise, going from little faults to greater, we shall finally lose sanctifying grace altogether. This, then, is the use, this indeed the necessity of acquiring virtues. Acquired virtues are good habits; and good habits, like skill in games, are got by repeated good acts: by doing a thing well over and over again we get into the way of doing the thing readily whenever we see occasion for it. Such good habits are the virtues of obedience, of self-control, of temperance, of meekness, of modesty, of diligence. These virtues themselves are not sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace may exist without them, as in the baptized infant or in the newly absolved sinner. The infant has no acquired habits whatever: the inveterate sinner, who has just made a good confession, has no acquired good habits, but many bad ones: yet both have sanctifying grace. But that grace is not safe unless the possessor of it is diligent in doing good, resisting evil, and so acquiring habits of virtue. These acquired habits of virtue are the ramparts and defenses of sanctifying grace. A man is a fool who, having a great treasure in his possession, leaves it unsecured.*

*From *Ye Are Christ's,* by the Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S.J.

CHAPTER LXVI.

Devotion to the Passion of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

DEVOTION to the Passion of Our Lord, like devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is strongly approved and urged upon the faithful by our holy Mother, the Church. It is a solid devotion, deeply founded in dogma, and reaches back to the earliest ages.*

True devotion, in its perfect meaning, includes love for and imitation of the person to whom we are devoted, and in reference to our dear Lord we may affirm that the Passion and the Blessed Sacrament are best suited to inflame our hearts with love, and to arouse in us an earnest desire of imitation.

They are the strongest proofs of the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for man, and therefore the best means to inflame the heart of man with love of Him. St. Augustine exclaims: "Let Him be nailed with the nails of love in the midst of thy heart, who, for love of thee, was nailed by the rough iron nails to the hard wood of the cross." Considering imitation as part of our devotion, while our blessed Saviour gave us an example of all virtues at all times, He practiced them in a most sublime and heroic manner during His Passion. In the most trying circumstances, Christ our Lord gave us an example of those virtues which we need most—patience, meekness, mercy, charity, silence, perfect poverty of spirit, sublime abandonment, obedience to the heavenly Father's will—even unto death. St.

*Read *Old and New*, by Fr. Nicholas Walsh, S.J. (Devotions).

Bonaventure says: "He who desires to go on advancing from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, should constantly meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ."

He who frequently reflects on the sufferings of Our Saviour can not live without loving Him, without imitating Him, without laboring and suffering in union with Him. Father Dignam, S.J., speaking to Religious, says: "We should go through the different circumstances of the Passion, and compare them with the occasions of suffering we meet with in religious life. They are drops of the chalice which Our Lord asks us to drink with Him. 'Can you not drink of the chalice I have drunk for the love of God?' His bonds are our vows; the sufferings of the scourging, our physical pain. He is treated by Herod, who held authority from God, as a fool. He was rejected for Barabbas; are we not sometimes rejected for another—set aside for some one who is certainly more worthy than ourselves? Is not the gall they gave Him like the bitterness we receive when we are longing for consolation? As we look at the dead body of Our Lord hanging on the cross, we see that His Passion was *one long act of submission:* 'Obedient unto death.' Every wound preaches the same lesson.

"The vows! How dear they should be: (1) Because they so perfectly fulfill the object of Christ's sufferings for me, in so weak a creature; (2) because they make so poor a life so great a glory to God; (3) because they impart so great a merit to such little acts, and promise so great a reward."

St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says: "The charity of Christ presseth us" (2 Cor. v. 14). One who meditates frequently on the sufferings of Christ will feel himself so constrained by the Saviour's in-

effable love for him, that he will not possibly be able to refrain from loving a God so full of love, who has suffered so much to win our love. Hence, the Apostle of the Gentiles said that he desired to know nothing but Jesus, and Jesus crucified. "I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2). All the saints have learned the art of loving God from the study of the crucifix. St. Francis of Assisi found no subject on which he exhorted his brethren with greater eagerness than the constant remembrance of the Passion of Jesus.

"As for myself," writes St. Alphonsus, "I can never be satiated with meditating on the Passion of our divine Redeemer. In this subject I find everything. Meditation on the Passion teaches the perfect observance of the vows and Rules, the love of contempt and of the trials that are inseparable from the religious life. He will never effect much who does not carry Jesus Christ crucified in his heart. He who keeps his Redeemer in view, can not but love Him truly." Jesus Christ crucified should be our love, our life, our treasure, our all. With St. Paul, we ought to be able to say: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross; and I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me. . . . I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 19, 20).

The sufferings of Christ have been a subject of earnest and fruitful meditation with all devout souls in all ages. The tradition is not difficult to receive that Mary, the Blessed Virgin, John, the beloved disciple, the penitent Magdalen and the other pious women who stood in the shadow of the cross on Calvary, together with the holy apostles, after the Ascension of Our Lord frequently visited the scene of

His sufferings and shed many tears along the Via Dolorosa. The Apostle St. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says: "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii. 12, 13).

Doubtless the Passion was earnestly preached to the people in the time of the apostles; else St. Paul would not have written: "O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth crucified among you?" (Gal. iii. 1). Looking to Jesus crucified for love of them, the early Christian martyrs, as well as those of a later day, were enabled to endure the most terrible sufferings with courage and heartfelt joy. In all ages thousands of the faithful have made pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Why? In order to visit the scenes of Our Lord's sufferings. They wished to impress deeply on their minds what the Blessed Saviour had suffered for mankind and for their own salvation in particular. Doubtless they returned to their homes better men and better women, their hearts aglow with the love of Jesus crucified. "All the saints," says St. Alphonsus, "cherished a tender devotion toward Jesus Christ in His Passion; this is the means by which they sanctified themselves." To all those who have followed the Redeemer on the way of the cross and are now glorified with Him, "to live was Christ and to die was gain" and therefore they longed for and eagerly embraced suffering.

St. Bernard was wont to exclaim: "My heart to the cross and the cross in my heart." Father Hubert, the author of *Ecce Homo,* writes: "The cross and sufferings of Our Lord were not only a source of comfort to the saints, but a book from which they

learned heavenly wisdom, as St. Bonaventure acknowledged. They had the crucified Saviour ever before their eyes. This is why we see the saints so often represented with the crucifix before them, like St. Aloysius, St. Teresa, St. Bernard (who bears the instruments of the Passion in his hands), and many others. On their death-bed they read and comforted themselves out of this book. 'Give me my book,' said St. Benitius on his death-bed (he meant his crucifix). 'This is my book, my best-beloved book; it will help me to make my last will. I have often looked into this book, and with it I will end my life.' "

A pious servant of God made use of the following good practice, in order to overcome temptation, to encourage himself in patience, and to stir up in himself love to Christ. He often placed himself opposite the crucifix and spoke thus to himself:

"See thy God on the cross—darest thou commit sin? See thy God on the cross, and do not complain in thy sufferings. See thy God on the cross, and consider how worthy of all love He is." St. Augustine did something of the same kind. "As often as I am tempted," he says, "I take refuge in the wounds of Christ, and make my sanctuary in the compassionate Heart of my Lord."

"The life of the servants of God," writes St. Paul of the Cross, "is a continual death. For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. I wish you to die this mystical death. Suffering is brief; joy will be eternal." We read in the Gospel of St. Luke (ix. 23): "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." These words were spoken by our divine Redeemer to all Christians, but they were meant undoubtedly for Religious in particular.

By the taking of their vows, they are professedly cross-bearers.

The three nails of the crucifix should remind them of the three vows by which they themselves are crucified with Jesus. As Father Edmund Hill, C.P., remarks in his admirable little book *A Few Simple and Business-Like Ways of Devotion to the Passion:* "If we would 'take up our cross' for the day, we must make a good, strong, generous resolution every morning to *mortify* our natural inclinations: (*a*) By performing our duties faithfully; (*b*) by bearing our trials patiently; (*c*) by fighting our temptations perseveringly. This will be taking up our cross in real earnest."

"The Apostle," says Father Baxter, "exhorts us to carry our cross daily in these words: 'Always bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus' (2 Cor. iv. 10). No day, therefore, ought to pass in which the disciple of Christ does not make some progress in mortification. Hence the learned St. Augustine remarks, 'The whole life of a Christian, if he lives according to the Gospel, is a cross and a martyrdom.' Embrace, therefore, your cross willingly, and whatever is disagreeable to flesh and blood; for the cross will be a passport to an everlasting life of happiness."

CHAPTER LXVII.

Observations Concerning the Meditations on the Passion of Christ.

"NOTHING effects in the soul so complete a sanctification as meditation on the sufferings of Christ," says St. Bonaventure. "Keep a continual remembrance of the sufferings of your heavenly Spouse," are the words of St. Paul of the Cross. "Endeavor to fathom the love with which He endured them. The shortest way is to lose yourself completely in that abyss of sufferings. Truly does the prophet call the Passion of Jesus a sea of love and of sorrow. Ah! therein lies the great secret which is revealed only to humble souls. In this vast sea the soul fishes for the pearls of virtues, and makes her own the sufferings of her Beloved. I have a lively confidence that your Spouse will teach you this divine method of fishing; He will teach it to you if you keep yourself in interior solitude, your mind free from all distraction, detached from all earthly affection, from every created thing, in pure faith and holy love."

In your meditations on the Passion, consider Our Lord's sufferings from different points of view by asking yourself the following simple questions:

Who suffers?

What does He suffer?

From whom does He suffer?

Why or for whom does He suffer?

How or with what affection does He suffer?

While meditating on the Passion of Our Lord, many affections may be entertained and expressed.

But, as Father Baxter, S.J., observes:* Spiritual writers remark seven affections which peculiarly correspond to the subject.

I. *Admire* in each mystery the dignity of the Person who suffers, and the intensity of the torments to which He freely subjects Himself. "Who is this who cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra? Why, then, is Thy apparel red, and Thy garment like theirs that tread in the wine-press?" (Is. lxiii. 1, 2.)

II. *Condole* with Him, as children do with their parents when in distress or affliction, or as brothers do with each other. "My son Absalom, Absalom, my son, would to God that I might die for thee, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom" (2 Kings xviii. 33).

III. *Be confounded* at your ingratitude, and grieve for your sins which were the causes of His sufferings. If these sins drew blood from Christ, they should surely draw tears from you. "I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me" (Ps. l. 5).

IV. *Love* Him who has shown such love for you, and suffered so much for your sake. "Lord," says St. Ambrose, "I owe more to your injuries for my redemption than to your works for my creation."

V. *Hope* for, and promise yourself, all the good that your heart can wish; for "He that spared not even His own Son, has He not also, with Him, given us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32).

VI. *Thank* Him for having suffered so much for you; "for the best means of preserving a benefit is a faithful recollection of it, and a constant profession of gratitude."

VII. *Imitate* your Lord and Leader in suffering

**Meditations for Every Day in the Year,* by Rev. Roger Baxter, S.J.

reproaches and injuries. He has suffered so much for you; and what return have you made, what return will you make? "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21).

Reflections on the Passion of Our Lord.*

CHRIST INVITES ALL TO CONTEMPLATE HIS PASSION.

I. Christ with good reason complains that after having suffered so much for men, He still finds them ungrateful and forgetful. "I looked for one," He might truly have said during His Passion, "who would grieve together with Me, but there was none; and for one who would comfort Me, and I found none" (Ps. lxviii. 21). "The just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart" (Is. lvii. 1). Meditate on this pitiful state of your Jesus; tell Him that you will not leave Him alone; that you will sympathize with Him; and that the just one shall not perish without your notice and condolence.

II. We can do nothing more pleasing to Our Redeemer than to meditate frequently on His Passion. He invites all mankind to this holy exercise by the mouth of His prophet: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow" (Lam. i. 12). He calls the attention of all mankind to His sufferings by the same prophet: "Remember My poverty," he says, "the wormwood and the gall" (Lam. iii. 19). Reflect, and apply the case to yourself: if you had suffered any serious loss in your property or person in the defense of your friend, would you not justly expect that he should ever be grateful for your friendly kindness? How much more has Christ suffered for you!

*Baxter (*ibid.*).

III. Present yourself before Christ as an attentive spectator of His sufferings, and promise to meditate on them with feelings of gratitude. Say with the prophet, "I will be mindful and remember; and my soul shall languish within me. These things I shall think over in my heart, therefore will I hope" (Lam. iii. 20). And if you contemplate His Passion, you will have good reason to hope; for He suffered in order that He might be able to present Himself as our advocate before His Father, and allege His own sufferings in our behalf. He pardoned the thief on the cross and gave him admission into paradise.

WHO SUFFERS?

I. He who suffers is the immaculate Lamb of God, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Pet. ii. 22). He was the Holy of holies, possessed of the divine Spirit beyond measure, the perfect form and image of His Father. His crucifiers confessed Him to be the Son of God, and their judge had already pronounced Him innocent.

II. He who suffered had already devoted His whole life to the good of others; He "had gone about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts x. 38). He therefore not only suffered without deserving these sufferings, but, on the contrary, He merited every kind of honor, respect, and veneration.

III. He who suffered was the great Lover of mankind. He had made Himself our Redeemer, Pastor, Physician, and Brother. If the son ought to feel sensibly the sufferings of his father, and the spouse to condole with her spouse in his afflictions, how much more reason have you to compassionate Jesus Christ in the sufferings which He has undergone for your

sake! There is no character, however affectionate, and no title, however dear, that this man-God has not assumed in your regard. Grieve for Him, then; and if you can not carry, with the Apostle, the marks of His sufferings on your own body, bear them in your heart. Resolve to suffer something, at least, for His sake.

WHAT DOES HE SUFFER?

I. The sufferings of Christ were various and numerous. He suffers in His external goods; for He is stripped of everything that He had, even of His very clothes, and He is suspended naked on the cross, in the presence of all the Jews. He suffers in His honor; for every species of reproach is thrown upon Him. His fame suffers; for He is variously traduced and calumniated: He is represented as a Samaritan, a man possessed by the devil, a glutton, a lover of wine, a blasphemer, and a seducer. His knowledge is insulted; for He is considered as a man without learning and a madman. His miracles are esteemed as so many impostures. And to crown all, He is totally abandoned by His friends.

II. How much He suffered in His body! His eyes were defiled with spittle, and filled with the blood which flowed from His sacred head, and tormented with the scornful gestures which they were obliged to behold. His ears were wounded with repeated blasphemies against God, and most unjust accusations brought against Himself. His taste was tormented with the most violent thirst, and then with vinegar and gall. Lastly, His sense of feeling was tortured in every part of His sacred body, by thorns, stripes and nails. So that it might be said of Him with truth, "From the sole of the foot unto

the top of the head, there is no soundness therein" (Is. i. 6).

III. Christ suffered, also, most severely in His mind. His agony in the garden and His dereliction on the cross were perhaps the severest of all His pains: add to those His foreknowledge of the ingratitude of mankind, and their abuse of His Redemption. Be ashamed at your cowardice in suffering and your impatience under the pressure of crosses. Form a resolution of suffering something for Him who has suffered so much for you.

FROM WHOM DOES HE SUFFER?

I. He suffers from every kind and character of men; from the highest to the lowest, from the sacred and the profane. He is dragged about the streets by the dregs of the people; He is forsaken by His friends, He is accused by the priests, laughed at by the soldiery, condemned by the council of the high priest, ignominiously treated in the court of the governor, and sentenced to death at the tribunal of the president. Learn, hence, to contemn the opinions and judgments of the world which was so unjust to your Saviour.

II. He suffered from those whom He came to save, on whom He had already bestowed most singular favors during His private and public life; so that He might truly say, "they have hated Me without cause" (John xv. 25). And what is still more, He suffered Himself to be betrayed by His own disciple, to give us an example of patience in the failure and abandonment of friends. "The man of My peace, in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, hath greatly supplanted Me" (Ps. xl. 10).

III. He was left exposed to the machinations of

hell, according to the expression of St. Luke: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53). He was surrendered to the power of Satan, not as holy Job was, with this restriction, "but yet save his life" (Job ii. 6), but absolutely and even to death. Compassionate your Lord, thus forsaken by His friends and left to the mercy of His most cruel enemies; and if at any time it should be your fortune to experience the insolence of men, remember "the disciple is not above the Master" (Matt. x. 24).

WHY OR FOR WHOM DOES HE SUFFER?

I. Christ did not suffer for Himself, for He was incapable of doing anything that deserved punishment; but He suffered in order to reconcile mankind to His Eternal Father, and to open to them the gates of heaven. He suffered in every manner, because in every manner men had offended their God, and because His object was to apply a remedy to every vice. To correct our covetousness, He chose to die naked; to reform our pride, He willingly suffered reproaches; He opposed His torments to our luxury, and He drank vinegar and gall to atone for our intemperance.

II. He suffered in a most peculiar manner for His enemies, that is, for all sinners; for "God commendeth His charity toward us, because, when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us; and when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 8, 10). And what is more, when He was in the act of expiring on the cross, He prayed for His executioners, that He might teach us "to overcome evil by good" (Rom. xii. 21).

III. Christ suffered for all mankind in general,

and for each of us in particular. Apply, then, His sufferings to yourself, and make them your own. Render yourself capable of saying with St. Paul, "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). Reflect what return you can make for so much love: "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation" (Ps. cxv. 3). Take, therefore, the chalice of His Passion, and drink it at least spiritually by contemplation; this is the return which your Saviour expects, and of which He will most cordially accept.

HOW OR WITH WHAT AFFECTION DOES HE SUFFER?

I. His sufferings were prompted by a most sincere love for us; He earnestly wished beforehand for the hour in which His Passion would commence. "I have a baptism," He says, "wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50.)

II. His sufferings were endured with the most profuse liberality. One single pain, one drop of blood, would have atoned for the crimes of a thousand worlds, in consequence of the nature of the sufferer; but Christ shed all His blood. "With Him" there is "plentiful redemption" (Ps. cxxix. 7).

III. He suffered with the greatest meekness; for, "when He was reviled, He did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not; but He delivered Himself to him who judged Him unjustly" (1 Pet. ii. 23). And the prophet had foretold that "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter" (Is. liii. 7).

IV. He suffered with an insatiable zeal for the salvation of mankind; hence He exclaimed on the cross, "I thirst" (John xix. 28).

V. In His sufferings He was perfectly humble; hence He might have said of Himself, "I am a worm and no man; the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people" (Ps. xxi. 7).

VI. He exercised the virtue of poverty during the whole of His Passion, and He ultimately died naked on the cross.

VII. His patience and perseverance were unconquerable, and never yielded to the most grievous tortures.

VIII. He practiced the virtue of obedience in its highest degree during His sufferings. He was "obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8). He was obedient not only to His Eternal Father, but even to His cruel executioners. "I have given My body to the strikers," He says of Himself by His prophet, "and My cheeks to them that plucked them; I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me" (Is. l. 6). Examine minutely this perfect model of patience and virtue, and "go and do thou likewise."

CHAPTER LXVIII.

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.—Mary's Love for Religious.

If it be true, and the holy Father St. Damian declares that it can not be doubted, that Mary loves all mankind, that after God her love for all, without exception, is the strongest, with what tenderness must she regard the Religious who has abandoned everything for love of Jesus and consecrated herself entirely to her divine Son! She well knows that such a life is closely conformed to her own and to that of Jesus. She beholds the Religious so often occupied with meditating on her life and virtues, proclaiming her praise, honoring her by novenas, visiting her oratories and shrines, reciting her Rosary, fasting on the vigils of her feasts, and urging others to practice devotion to her. She sees the Religious at her feet, calling upon her for help, and begging for the graces she loves to obtain for her children, such as perseverance in the service of God, strength in temptation, love of Jesus, and detachment from the things of earth. How, then, can it be doubted that she will use her merciful influence in behalf of the Religious? And this dear Mother is so grateful. "I love them that love me" (Prov. viii. 17), the Holy Ghost says by the lips of Mary. Yes, she is so grateful that, according to St. Andrew of Crete, she returns the least service with the richest gifts. She promises to free from sin all who honor her and influence others to honor her: "They that work by me shall not sin," and to them she assures the kingdom of heaven: "They that explain me

shall have life everlasting" (Ecclus. xxiv. 30, 31). A Religious owes special gratitude to Almighty God for introducing her into the convent life, where, in the community exercises and by the example of her fellow sisters, she is so frequently reminded to have recourse to Mary, who is the joy and the hope of all who invoke her.

It is Mary herself who calls innumerable souls to religion. St. Philip Benitius, a handsome and promising youth, entered the chapel of the Servites of Mary, outside the city of Florence, to attend the services, one Thursday in Easter week. During the reading of the epistle, he heard the words formerly addressed to the deacon Philip: "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot" (Acts viii. 29). The words made a deep impression on him, for he, too, was called Philip. He felt that they were addressed directly to him by the Holy Ghost. They pursued him the rest of the day, and that night he dreamed that he was in a wild, pathless region full of rocks, bleak hills and deep, dangerous ravines. Briars and thorns, and all manner of creeping things covered the muddy ground. Frightened at the wildness and the loneliness of the place, he cried out in terror. Then he saw the Blessed Virgin, surrounded by angels hovering in the air. In her hand was the habit of a Servite, and she uttered the words: "Philip, go near, and join thyself to this chariot." He awoke, and, recognizing the meaning of the words, no longer doubted that he should join the Order of the Servites of Mary. Early next morning he presented himself before the Superior of the convent, requested admittance, and was clothed as a lay-Brother. Thus did Mary introduce him among her chosen servants. St. Teresa was only twelve years old when she lost her mother. Full of sorrow, the child threw herself on

her knees before a picture of the Blessed Virgin, and begged her to be to her a mother in the place of her whom she had lost. Mary heard her petition. "I have never called upon this most glorious Mother," St. Teresa tells us, "without immediately experiencing her gracious protection."

Great, indeed, should be the confidence of the Religious in the Blessed Mother of God and Queen of heaven, since through her mediation she has doubtless received the grace to enter the religious state. "He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord" (Prov. viii. 35), are the words that holy Church sings on the high festivals of the Mother of God. Whoever finds me, says Mary, by sincere devotion to me, will find the life of grace on earth and salvation in heaven. St. Anthony exclaims: "All who bravely defend this powerful heavenly Queen will surely be saved." St. Anselm goes so far as to address the divine Mother in the following terms: "O Blessed Virgin, as it is impossible for one who does not honor thee, for one whom thou dost not help, to be saved, so is it impossible for him who commends himself to thee, for him whom thou dost favor to be lost." Even in this world, says St. Bonaventure, will the foster-children of Mary be acknowledged by the blessed in heaven as their brethren, and every one that wears the badge of Mary's service is inscribed in the book of life. Devotion to Mary may be looked upon as a sign of the elect. St. Thomas says: "Mary signifies star of the sea. As the star guides the mariner into port, so the Christian will be guided to heaven by Mary."

Were a true servant of Mary damned, it would be because Mary either could not or would not help him. But no, says St. Bernard, it is impossible for

a true servant of Mary ever to be lost, for she is lacking neither in power nor in willingness to assist him. Let us reflect a little on Mary's power with God to procure the salvation of her servants. The holy Church, to inspire us with confidence in this great mediatrix, directs us to address her by the title of "powerful"—*"Virgo potens,"* "Powerful Virgin, pray for us"! God Himself, the Almighty God, has adorned her with this title, for Mary has assured us: "He that is mighty hath done great things to me" (Luke i. 49). St. Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, writes: "The Son loves to hear His Mother petitioning Him for favors, and He grants all that she asks, in this way to repay her for what she did for Him when she became His Mother." Cosmas of Jerusalem declares the intercession of Mary to be not only powerful, but all-powerful; and in the same spirit Richard of St. Lawrence writes: "Through the Almighty Son has the Mother become all-powerful." The divine Son is almighty by nature, the Mother is all-powerful by grace. She obtains from God all that she asks, and this for two reasons: first, because she was the most faithful of God's servants and loved Him most; hence, as Suarez says, the Lord loves Mary above all the blessed together. St. Bridget one day heard Jesus saying to His Mother: "My Mother, ask for whatever it pleases thee, for thy requests will always be granted. Because thou didst deny Me nothing on earth, I can refuse thee nothing in heaven." The second reason that Mary is so powerful with Almighty God is because she is the Mother of Our Lord and Saviour. As her requests are those of a mother, they partake of the nature of commands; therefore, it is impossible that she should not be heard. St. John Damascene cries out to her: "O my Mistress, thou art all-powerful

to save sinners! Thou dost need no recommendation with God, for thou art His Mother." When St. Chrysostom speaks of the request that Mary presented to her divine Son at the wedding-feast of Cana, that He would supply more wine, he remarks: "Jesus replied to His Mother's suggestion, 'They have no wine,' in words that seemed to refuse the favor she was craving, 'Woman, what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come' (John ii. 4); nevertheless the divine Saviour failed not to do all that she desired."

Have recourse to Mary, the all-powerful Mother of God; run to her with confidence in all your troubles; she is your own dear Mother! All praise and thanksgiving be to the ever-blessed Trinity, who hath manifested to us Mary, ever virgin, clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a mystic crown of twelve stars!

Mary's Desire to Help Her Children.

Great is Mary's desire to succor those who honor her, confide in her and invoke her. What avail to us would be Mary's power if she did not care for us? But we may feel sure that, as she is the most powerful among the saints, so also does she care most for our salvation. "Who after thy divine Son," cries out St. Germanus to Mary, "has done more for us than thou, O Mary? In all our woes who assists us as thou? Who is so helpful to poor sinners as thou? O Mary, thy power is far greater than we can comprehend!" St. Andrew Avellino calls Mary the business-agent of heaven. But what kind of business does Mary carry on in heaven? Her business is to

make constant intercession for us, obtaining for us the favors for which we beg her. She once said to St. Bridget: "I am called the Mother of mercy, and that I am by the mercy of God." Who indeed has given to us this tender protectress except the merciful God, who wills us to be saved? The love of all mothers taken together can not equal that which Mary bears to a single one of her servants. She is compared to a beautiful olive-tree: "As a fair olive-tree in the plains" (Ecclus. xxiv. 19). "In the plains," that is, that all may behold her, may run to her. Oil, the symbol of mercy, flows from the fruit of the olive-tree; Mary, "the fair olive-tree," diffuses her tenderness over all that have recourse to her.

Let us run to her in all our necessities, for she is always ready to assist us, her hands are full always of graces and favors. Richard of St. Victor declares that Mary's heart is so sympathetic that, as soon as she learns the needs of her servants, she hastens to anticipate their requests, and helps them before they call upon her. She is gentle and loving toward all who come to her. Our sweet Mother herself attracts all to her, promising them all kinds of good things: "Come to me, all ye that desire me, for in me is all hope of life and virtue." Mary calls all, the just and the sinner. As the evil one is always going about seeking whom he may devour, so does this divine Mother go about seeking whom she can save. One cry brings her to our assistance. St. Bonaventure says that Mary so longs to help us and see us in heaven, that she feels hurt and offended not only by those who openly outrage and insult her, but also by those who do not come to her for assistance. The very thought of Mary, as he tells us, used to inun-

date his soul with consolation. He saw in her mercy personified, her hands outstretched to free the slaves of sin. Mary's unceasing occupation in heaven is intercession for the needy. Let us invoke her in the words of St. Thomas of Villanova: "Come, beloved Queen and Advocate, fulfil thy office! Thou art the intercessor of the needy. Help us, poorest of sinners!"

Our Lord once revealed to St. Catherine of Siena that He had charged Mary to take men, and especially sinners, prisoners, and lead them to Him; and Mary herself told St. Bridget that there was no sinner, no matter how abandoned, who, if he called on her, would not return to God and, by her mediation, obtain forgiveness. Just as the magnet attracts iron, so does she draw the hardest hearts to herself and to God. "Who," exclaims Innocent III., "has ever had recourse to Mary, and was not heard?"

Holy Church teaches us to call the blessed Mother of Jesus our hope: *"Salve, spes nostra!"* "Hail, our hope!" The godless Luther could not endure to hear Mary addressed as our hope. God alone, he said, should be our hope, and God curses him who puts his hope in a creature. That is true, but only when we place our hope in creatures without regard to God. We hope in Mary as in our intercessor with God. We have so much the more reason to do so, since God, according to St. Bernard, has intrusted to Mary all the treasures of grace that He wills to impart to us. Let us, then, confidently invoke the divine Mother, especially when the fear of hell torments us. Let us say to her with all our heart: "In thee, O heavenly Queen, I trust that I may not be confounded in eternity! In thee do I

place my hope. Mother of Jesus, Mother of mercy, my own dear Mother, take care of me and save me from hell! Make me a saint, that with thee in heaven I may praise and glorify my Lord, thy divine Son, forever."

CHAPTER LXIX.

Mary, Our Mother: How to Honor Her.

The Most Holy Rosary: Other Devotions and Pious Practices.

FROM what has been said, we feel assured that Mary can and does help her servants, especially those who are constant in their devotedness to her, and who not only profess their love in their words, but also show it in their actions. "Mary, the Mother of God, is my mother," St. Aloysius was wont to exclaim in an ecstasy of delight and gratitude, and like a true servant of Mary he was ever anxious to avoid the least thing that could displease her or her divine Son, and always eager to honor and please her by acts of mortification and by the imitation of her virtues. Let us do likewise; let us carefully avoid whatever is displeasing to Almighty God. "Detach thy will from sin," wrote St. Gregory VII. to the Countess Matilda, "and you will find in Mary a mother more willing to protect and assist you than any earthly mother." If you love Mary truly, you will please her by a constant struggle against your passions, by striving to become ever more like to her in virtue, by mortifying yourself in little things, and by performing some devotion in her honor every day. Your constant endeavor should be to please your sweet Mother, and this you will do above all by doing the will of her divine Son, by your fidelity in the service of God, in laboring for your own sanctification, and the salvation of souls.

"True devotion," as we read in *The Little Book of Our Lady,* "comes from God and leads to God. The fundamental rule in regard to the homage which we offer to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints is, that it must ultimately be referred to God and our eternal salvation. Our devotion to the Blessed Virgin would be of no avail if it did not tend toward our union with God, toward possessing Him eternally.

"True devotion extends itself to the saints without being separated from the eternal *Source* of all sanctity. 'For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is Christ Jesus' (1 Cor. iii. 11). Let Him be the foundation of our devotion to His holy Mother.

"We are not able to honor our blessed Lady adequately, since, through her, Jesus has come to us. Oh, how great, how sublime was Mary's vocation! God predestined her before all ages to be the Mother of the Saviour of the world. And having called her to fill this most glorious office He would not have her be a mere channel of grace, but an instrument cooperating, both by her excellent qualities and by her own free will, in the great work of our Redemption.

"For thousands of years the world had been expecting the promised Messias. The fulness of time has now come. The eternal Father sends a heavenly messenger to Mary, to treat with her of the mystery of the Incarnation. She pronounces the word *'Fiat!'* 'Be it done!' And the heavens open; the earth possesses a Saviour; *Mary has become the Mother of God.*

"Years pass by. The time has arrived when the great sacrifice is to be consummated. We find Mary at the foot of the cross. With the dying breath of

Jesus she receives the Church as an inheritance. *Mary becomes our Mother.*

"These are the two great titles which give Mary a claim on our veneration and affection. She is like a fountain from which the waters of grace have spread themselves abundantly over the whole human race. As we have once received through her Jesus, the Source of all blessing and grace, so we also obtain through her powerful intercession the various effects and applications of this grace in all the circumstances of life. Her maternal charity, which shines forth in the mystery of the Incarnation, also causes her to take a share in the consequences of this universal principle of benediction. Thus Mary is, by her intercession, the Mother of all Christians, the Mother of all men. Her overflowing charity is an appropriate instrument for the operations of grace.

"Who is better able than Mary to plead in our behalf? She can confidently speak to the Heart of her divine Son, where her wishes, her sentiments, find an echo. She fears no refusal. The love of the Son makes Him lend a favorable ear to the request of His Mother.

"Our blessed Lady is able and willing to help us, but in order to secure her powerful and kind assistance we must have a sincere devotion to her. This devotion must be practical: it ought not to consist in words only, but in actions. A person truly devout to Mary will enroll himself in her confraternities, especially in the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary; he will celebrate her feasts, venerate her images, visit her temples, and endeavor to imitate her virtues. Certainly, he can not be said to have a true devotion toward the Mother of God who does not honor and invoke her by frequent and fervent prayers. Among the various exercises in her honor, comes in the first

place the Mass of our blessed Lady. Pious historians record many favors obtained by those who celebrated or heard Mass in her honor. The Church also grants special privileges to the Mary-Mass on Saturdays. The Office of the Blessed Virgin, her Litanies, and the holy Rosary are singularly pleasing to her. Let us not imagine, however, that to secure the special protection of the Mother of God our prayers must needs be very long; much will depend upon circumstances; but let us not forget the advice which blessed John Berchmans gave to his companions at his death: 'The least homage is sufficient, provided it be constant.' Hence, what we have once resolved to do in honor of our blessed Lady must never be put aside or neglected, but must be faithfully persevered in, daily, until death."

Father Basso urges the devout clients of Mary to observe some very commendable practices, as follows:

On rising in the morning and on retiring at night say three *Aves* in honor of the purity of Mary with the aspiration: "By thy holy virginity and Immaculate Conception, O most pure Virgin, purify my body and sanctify my soul!" Take refuge under her protecting mantle, that she may keep you from sin by day and by night. When the clock strikes, salute Mary with an *Ave*. Do the same on leaving or returning to your room, also when passing her pictures and shrines. At the beginning and end of every work or action, say an *Ave*, for blessed is that work which is placed between two *Aves*. Whenever we salute our dearest Queen with the "Angelic Salutation," so pleasing to her ears, she answers us with a grace from heaven.

An Act of Consecration, the *"Salve Regina,"* the *"Sub tuum præsidium,"* the *"Memorare,"* or some

other favorite prayer is said daily by devout souls in honor of our blessed Mother, to obtain from her the grace of a holy life and a happy death. Another very acceptable devotion to Our Lady consists in offering three *Paters* and *Aves* to the Most Holy Trinity, in thanksgiving for the graces and privileges bestowed on her. The Saturday's fast on bread and water is a very laudable practice for those who have the courage to make such a sacrifice in honor of Mary. One can at least refrain from dainties. Do not neglect to perform some little devotion or mortification in honor of Mary on Saturday, for it is especially consecrated to her by holy Church. Let no day pass without reading a little from some book that treats of Mary. Make with great fervor the novenas preparatory for the feasts of Mary.

Father Bowden of the Oratory, in his *Miniature Life of Mary,* suggests the following practices in honor of Our Lady. They may be drawn by lot, or otherwise chosen, at the beginning of a month, especially the month of May.

1. Take a short time from your recreation to spend in solitude conversing with Mary or in meditation on the mysteries of her life.

2. Rise punctually in the morning, invoking her as "the morning star."

3. Invoke her sixty-three times as "Virgin Mother" in honor of her sixty-three years.

4. Visit in spirit one of her great sanctuaries.

5. Mortify your will three times as an offering to Mary.

6. Say three *Glorias* in honor of the saints and Doctors who have explained and defended her prerogatives.

7. Gain indulgences for the soul in purgatory most devoted to the Blessed Virgin in life; offer Mass and communion for this purpose.

8. Ask Mary to be present with you during the day to drive away evil spirits.

9. Perform some act of kindness with inconvenience to yourself.

10. Say three "Hail Marys" in reparation for the blasphemies uttered against her.

11. Give an alms in honor of her poverty. (If you have no money at your disposal, you can bestow the alms of kindness and sympathy.)

12. Invoke the saints who were related to her—Sts. Joseph, Joachim, Anne, etc.

13. Mortify your sight, once or more, in honor of Mary's modesty.

14. Burn a candle before her image or picture.

15. Recall with devotion her words recorded in the Gospel, remembering how many of your sins are committed in speech. Bear your sufferings and sorrows silently and patiently.

16. Say the litany for the conversion of a soul for Mary to offer to God.

17. Shun idleness during the day in imitation of Mary at Nazareth.

18. Say a "Hail Mary" in honor of St. Gabriel, who brought it to earth.

19. Practice some little mortification at meals.

20. Before going to sleep, place yourself with the infant Jesus in Mary's arms.

21. Say seven *Glorias* with extended arms, in honor of her seven dolors.

22. Make a spiritual communion in union with her disposition at the Annunciation.

23. Say a *Memorare* to obtain Mary's help at the hour of death.

24. Keep silence for a short time, and with Mary ponder on God's words in your heart.

25. Say a "Hail Mary" before going to bed, to prevent one mortal sin during the night.

26. Visit her altar or image in atonement for the desecration of her sanctuaries.

27. Say nine "Hail Marys" in union with the nine choirs of angels who are ever praising her.

28. Say a *Salve* for the spread of devotion to her.

29. Say fifteen *Glorias,* in honor of the last fifteen years of Mary's life, for the grace of perseverance.

30. Kiss the ground, and say three "Hail Marys" for the virtue of holy purity.

31. Say a "Hail Mary" in reparation for your neglect of Mary's service during this month.

32. Distribute leaflets in praise of Mary, scapulars, medals, pictures, and beads, to promote devotion to the blessed Mother of God.

Let us conclude this chapter with some special reflections on the Rosary. In the Litany of Loretto the Church calls Mary "Queen of the most holy Rosary." In his beautiful and instructive sermon on the solemnity of the most holy Rosary, the Very Rev. D. T. McDermott says: "Why is the devotion called *the most holy Rosary?* The Church carefully weighs her words. She selects terms to convey her meaning as precisely as it is possible for language to express it. However language, in its poverty, may fail to express fully her meaning, the Church never indulges in exaggeration. Yet she calls the devotion of the Rosary—*most holy.* And most holy it shall be found to be in its origin, in its prayers, in its object, and in its effects."

The word *Rosary,* as applied to this devotion, means *Garden of Roses.* It is, of course, figurative, and is intended to impress upon all that they will be able to gather flowers of piety and the fruits of every virtue from this devotion.

In Sacred Scripture, our prayers and good works, because of an analogy they bear to them, are likened

to material things. For example, our pious deeds are compared to light, in the following text: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Good example is likened to the perfume of precious ointments: "Let us run in the odor of Thy ointments." Incense, in the words of holy David, has become a symbol of prayer: "Let my prayer ascend like incense in Thy sight." Men regard those who live soberly, justly, and piously as diffusing around them, by holiness of life, a sweet odor, just as fragrant flowers fill the surrounding atmosphere with perfume. Hence, St. Paul says of those who lead holy lives: "They are the good odor of Christ unto God." And men say of them at death: "They died in the odor of sanctity."

Christians were accustomed to decorate the altars of the Blessed Virgin, and to crown her statues with flowers, because these were emblematic of Mary's virtues. Hence, they hoped their prayers and devotions would be as acceptable to the holy Virgin as the sweet-smelling flowers they offered her were agreeable to men, and that their contemplation of these flowers would lead to the cultivation, in their own hearts, of those virtues which found in flowers such beautiful emblems. The Rosary is then fittingly called Mary's chaplet or wreath.

The Rosary is a string of one hundred and fifty small beads, divided by fifteen larger ones into tens or decades, as they are commonly called. The string of beads ordinarily used has but five decades, and is but a third part of the Rosary.

The arrangement of beads in this manner for the purpose of telling prayers, shows that they come to us, not only from the earliest Christian times, but that they were in use among the Jews. And it is not

at all unlikely that the Blessed Virgin used something very similar to a string of beads in counting her prayers. So completely identified did beads become (in the course of time) with the counting of prayers, that the word "bead" signified *prayer*. The advantage of a string of beads for those who had a certain number of prayers to say was, that it allowed the mind and heart to be concentrated entirely on God, while the hand mechanically told the number, by passing a bead between the fingers.

The one hundred and fifty beads represent the psalms of David. The devotion of such of the Jews and of the early Christians as could read and procure books, was the reading of the psalms. In order to furnish a substitute to those who could not read or procure books, vocal prayers were assigned to the number of one hundred and fifty—to be told by transferring a pebble (for every prayer) from one pocket to another, or by passing a bead through the fingers.

The Rosary was recited in this form until the thirteenth century. While, since that era it has developed, and been made eminently practical, yet there is nothing in it to-day that did not spring from the germs it held then.

It was then aptly called the people's psalter. The psalms of David are very suggestive of the Rosary as developed by St. Dominic. Some of the psalms are prophetic, descriptive of Our Saviour's coming, His office, and His reign. These correspond to the Joyful Mysteries. Other psalms are lamentations for sin, and prayers for deliverance from sufferings and enemies. These correspond to the Sorrowful Mysteries. Then again there are those which are hymns of thanksgiving and praise, psalms of victory. These correspond to the Glorious Mysteries. The

fifteen larger beads denote the mysteries of the Rosary. The arrangement of the Rosary in this form, with its meditation on the mysteries, is generally credited to St. Dominic. It matters not whether the Rosary of to-day was given to the saint by the Blessed Virgin herself, who is said to have appeared to him, or whether it was the result of an inspiration of grace. It has proved its title to heavenly origin by its fruits. "A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit; neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit; wherefore, by their fruits you shall know them."

The one great object of this devotion is to impress upon men the truths connected with the Redemption. When the number, the piety, the heroic virtues of those joined together in the devotion of the Rosary are considered, it must appear manifest that this form of prayer is simply irresistible with God.

Just think of the number of holy souls joined in the confraternities of the Rosary, some still in the world, others in religious communities! Many of these, like Aloysius, are angels in human flesh, who add bodily mortifications to innocence of life. Others are holy penitents, like Magdalen, Augustine, and Mary of Egypt, who honor God more by their penance than ninety-nine just who need not penance. Think then of this countless number of devout men and women, who every day recite the Rosary piously for themselves and their brethren! Think of the dying who, in momentary expectation of seeing God, devoutly offer the prayers of the Rosary as their last petitions to heaven in behalf of their brethren and themselves! Think of those who were once members of these confraternities, who are now among the elect of God, and who constantly watch over the welfare of these fellow-members on earth. Think of the prayers, almsdeeds, mortifications of

all those united in the Rosary, as presented to Jesus Christ through the hands of His Mother, and may it not be said they do a holy violence to heaven? "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." How truly may it be said of those who, through this devotion, learn the virtues of Mary, and exhibit them in their daily lives: "They that explain me shall have everlasting life."

The Rev. Mother Francis Raphael, O.S.D. (Augusta Theodosia Drane), writes, in *The Spirit of the Dominican Order:* "If we examine the special devotion of our saints, we shall find that the mysteries of the Rosary were like an unseen thread running through them all. Take the story of Magdalen Angelica, whose life was divided according to the three parts of the Rosary. At the commencement of her religious conversion she kept entirely to meditation on the Joyful Mysteries, in order to obtain a childlike gaiety and innocence of heart. Then when she had received the habit of religion, she took the Sorrowful Mysteries to meditate upon, and with them entered upon a long course of austerities and disciplines. And at last she passed on to the Glorious Mysteries; and heaven rained down a very deluge of light and consolation into her soul, so long left disconsolate on the cross of her agonizing Spouse. This light was so divine and wonderful that it often became visible, encircling even her body in a bright luminous cloud. 'She acquired all her perfection,' says her biographer, 'through the meditations of the Rosary;' and when one Rosary Sunday, toward the close of her life, she knelt before Our Lady's altar, and prayed for innocence of heart, the divine Mother spoke to her and said: 'Be of good heart, my daughter; for that which thou prayest for, thou already hast."

We read in *The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament:* "It was Our Lady herself who, at Lourdes, excited us to the devotion of the Rosary. She passed through her fingers a long Rosary of glittering beads, smiling the while upon Bernardette, who was reciting her chaplet.

"If we desire to gather the fruit, we must bend the branch. If we long to possess Jesus, we must draw Mary to us. The Rosary is the sweet and powerful means of finding Jesus through His Mother.

"The month of the holy Rosary comes to recall to us how much the immaculate Virgin loves this devotion and excites us to practice it. Let us be faithful to the call, we, above all, who are servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament. What, in truth, does Jesus Eucharistic long for? What does He desire in abiding with us, except to live always in our thoughts, in our love? 'Do this in commemoration of Me,' did He say when giving us the Eucharist. Now, the Rosary responds to the same desire. As the Blessed Sacrament contains Jesus, with all the graces and virtues of His past states, so the Rosary calls up before the mind's eye all His mysteries. Therefore it is that, after the Eucharist and the liturgical offices, which successively recall to us all the feasts of Our Lord, the Rosary is the very best way of continually contemplating the life of Jesus Christ and of uniting ourselves to Him.

"If we afford so much pleasure to father, to mother, to friends by a hearty greeting, how much more must our fervent 'Angelic Salutation' please Jesus and Mary! Oh, then, let us repeat, without tiring, this filial salutation, and Jesus and Mary will help us *now and at the hour of our death!*"

In *The Rosary Magazine* we read the following

interesting communication: "The Holy Father Pope Pius X. has offered a signal mark of his love for the Rosary in granting, July 31, 1906, to all those who piously carry the beads about with them, an indulgence of one hundred years and as many quarantines. This indulgence may be gained daily, provided, of course, that one be in a state of grace. Rosarians will recall that this privilege was long enjoyed by members of the Rosary Confraternity, Pope Innocent VIII. in a bull dated February 26, 1491, having conferred it in the blessed hope that such a plenitude of favor might spread devotion to the Rosary over land and sea. In 1899 Pope Leo XIII. published a catalogue of indulgences in which the above did not appear. As Rosarians we rejoice that this favor is again ours, and we fervently pray that a still wider propagation of the Rosary devotion may result, and that the desire of the Venerable Pontiff to bring all things to Christ may be speedily realized.

"In view of the many inquiries concerning the Crozier indulgence, which is five hundred days for each Hail Mary, it may be well to state here that a greater indulgence, that of five years and five quarantines, can be gained by Rosarians each time the holy name of Jesus is reverently pronounced in the recitation of the Dominican Rosary."

The Mass and the Rosary.

One day, St. Dominic, the great apostle of the Rosary, was preaching before the Duke of Bretagne, his court, and an immense crowd of people. He affirmed that, as he had learned from heaven, no homage, with the exception of the holy sacrifice of the Mass and the Divine Office, was so pleasing to Jesus and Mary as the fervent recitation of the Rosary.

This assertion seemed exaggerated to many of his hearers, but they were soon led to a change of sentiment.

St. Dominic celebrated Mass after his sermon, and now behold a miracle under the eyes of all. At the moment of Consecration, when the saint elevated the sacred Host, they saw in it the Mother of God, holding in her arms and pressing to her breast the Infant Jesus. The people, transported with joy, gazed upon the ravishing spectacle. But behold, at the elevation of the chalice, another vision replaced the first. It was Christ on the cross, covered with blood and wounds, whom Dominic held in his hands. Then, near the moment of Communion, a third prodigy roused the wonder of the faithful to the highest pitch. A dazzling light surrounded the altar, and in its splendor appeared Our Lord in all the glory of His Resurrection, as on the day He blessed His disciples, and ascended to heaven.

The holy sacrifice over, St. Dominic explained the meaning of the apparitions. The Infant Jesus in His Mother's arms represented the Joyous Mysteries; Jesus crucified, the Sorrowful; and Jesus risen, the Glorious. God wished to show us that all are contained and reproduced in the holy sacrifice of the Mass just as they are honored by the Rosary. He wished, above all, to make us understand how much He desires these mysteries to be cherished by Christians. By that miracle, He openly confirmed the preaching they had just heard.

The Rosary is the abridgment, the résumé of the whole life of Christ, as is also the holy sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass gives Him to us in reality, and the Rosary makes us contemplate Him. The Mass rises, then, above the Rosary, as sacramental communion rises above spiritual communion. But as

spiritual communion bears excellent fruits in a fervent soul, something like those of the Sacrament itself, so by the pious recitation of the Rosary we unite very intimately with Jesus in His mysteries, to offer to God all their merits, and to receive for ourselves their most abundant fruits.

The Rosary, with its Joyous, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries, is of so great importance in the eyes of holy Church that she has consecrated the month of October to the practice of the devotion.

To salute Mary and, with her, the Most Holy Trinity—to salute Jesus, the blessed Fruit of the Virgin—to meditate on the mysteries of our Redemption—is not this to love God and Mary, and to draw upon one's self all the favors of heaven?

He who recites his Rosary gathers the roses of love. Blessed are those Christian families of which all the members, old and young, recite the Rosary in common, for, says Our Saviour, "Where two or three are gathered in My name, *there am I in their midst.*"

But the Holy Eucharist comprises and sums up all mysteries. Then although it is good to recite the Rosary everywhere, let us, above all, recite it in church. With what satisfaction Jesus, present in the sacred Host, will listen to the praises we address to His Mother and, through her, to His divine Heart! *

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CHAPTER LXX.

Mary, the Model of Holy Virginity.

MARY, the Queen of heaven, is the Mistress of all the faithful, and especially of those devoted to the spiritual life. It is proper, therefore, that we honor her not only by prayer and devout practices, but still more by the imitation of her virtues. Christ our Lord willed that His divine Mother, after His glorious Ascension, should remain some years on earth to be the teacher of the disciples. In all their needs they went to her for advice and instruction. In accordance with the will of her divine Son, Mary has ever since acted as teacher and model in His Church. Her perfect sanctity makes her a shining example, a leader for all that are aiming at perfection. Among the numerous virtues that adorn the Blessed Mother of God, there are three which Religious should especially make their own, namely, her chastity, obedience, and poverty.

The first of these virtues, chastity or virginal purity, is the most essential adornment of a religious soul. Mary was the first among the Jewish maidens who, by divine light, attained to the knowledge of the inestimable value of virginity. She loved it more than life, and she would not, as it appears, have accepted the dignity of divine motherhood had she been obliged to sacrifice her precious virginity. Learn of Mary to value this holy virtue at its true price, and how to preserve it.

Virginity is called, in the language of all nations, the angelic virtue. Its beauty and charm brought God Himself down to earth. It is the virtue that

the new Adam loved with special predilection. To those who practice it, He gives, besides a priceless peace of heart, the assurance that they shall see God and follow the Lamb without spot whithersoever He goeth in the new Jerusalem. It is this virtue that beautifies the countenance, imparting to it the freshness of the lily and the glow of the rose, and which raises man above the angels. It is a virtue so lovely, so precious, so exquisite, that human language hardly dare mention its name for fear of desecrating it. The Holy Ghost says: "No price is worthy of a continent soul" (Ecclus. xxvi. 20). All the wealth, the rank, and the honors of this world are nothing compared with one pure, virginal soul.

But what means must be adopted to keep the lily of virginity pure and spotless? The first means consists in mortification of the senses. St. Jerome says that he deceives himself who thinks to live among sensual pleasures and wickedness without danger of falling into sins against the holy virtue. When St. Paul was tormented by the sting of the flesh, he had recourse to bodily mortification: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27). If the body is not mortified, it will hardly obey the spirit. "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters" (Cant. ii. 2). As the lily preserves its beauty among the pricking thorns, so is virginity protected by the rampart of mortification.

The second means for the preservation of this beautiful virtue is humility. Cassian says, "He who is not humble can not be chaste." Almighty God frequently punishes pride by permitting it to engender the hideous monster of impurity. King David acknowledges this the cause of his own fall: "Before I was humbled I offended" (Ps. cxviii. 67).

Humility wins purity for us. The stronghold of virginity is humility, its custodian is love. He who thinks to conquer the revolts of the lower nature by continence alone without the virtue of humility is like a drowning man who tries to save himself by throwing out one hand.

The third means above and beyond all others is prayer. Prayer is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the precious treasure of virginal purity. If God does not grant us His gracious assistance, and for this we must pray, we can not, like the lily among the thorns, remain unsullied. The holy Fathers tell us that prayer is necessary for the salvation of adults, and they ground their proposition on the words of the Holy Spirit, who says: "We ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1); "ask, and it shall be given you" (Matt. vii. 7). The Angelic Doctor teaches that after Baptism constant prayer is necessary for man. As for every practice of virtue the grace of God is needed, still greater is the need when the holy virtue is in question, since fallen nature inclines so strongly to the opposite vice. Man will not by his own strength remain pure and, therefore, in those violent conflicts with the impure spirit, he must cry to the Lord with his whole heart in imitation of the Wise Man, who says: "And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was, I went to the Lord, and besought Him, and said with my whole heart" (Wis. viii. 21).

We must stifle the first movements of sensuality as we would crush a young snake. If we let it grow, it will assume such proportions as are not easily overcome. A bad thought or imagination must be banished at once. This may ofttimes be accom-

plished by one little word, the holy name of Jesus, or that of Mary. A tranquil turning of the mind to some other subject, especially an act of love, a recalling of the presence of God, a sigh of the heart to the purest of Virgins, any of these will banish the tempter. Should he return, be not discouraged. Renew confidence in God, and repeat some little ejaculatory prayer for help. Let us resolve rather to die than to commit sin. Let us seek refuge in the wounds of Jesus Christ, making the sign of the cross on our breast. The three *Aves* morning and evening in honor of the purity of Mary Immaculate are a powerful remedy against the assaults of the impure spirit.

Commenting on Mary's virginal purity, the author of *The Month of Our Lady* writes: "Mary during her whole life employed the most active vigilance in guarding the inestimable treasure which she possessed. Although unknown to the infirmities of corrupt nature, she maintained as much watchfulness as if in everything and everywhere she had something to fear, something to dread. To keep farther from herself every enemy of the purity of the heart, she cultivated assiduously the virtues of humility, modesty, temperance, diligence, silence, and devout contemplation—fair and august daughters of heaven; and they shielded her against all those forces which the world, the flesh, and the spirits of darkness marshal in battle to overwhelm our virtue. St. Ambrose very well says of Mary that she was a virgin not only in body but in mind; that she was humble in heart, grave in words, prudent in spirit, little inclined to speak, diligent in perusing the Holy Scriptures and in avoiding every danger, that she might devote herself wholly to God. The Church salutes Mary as Mother most chaste, Mother inviolate

"Mary is Queen of virgins. Her virginity then must be embellished with qualities altogether new to the world. What more unheard of than virginity and motherhood united in the same person! What more new than that a most pure virgin, not knowing man, should give birth to a son! That a virgin should become a mother by the operation of the Holy Ghost! That a virgin, free from what is common to all other mothers, should become the Mother of God! The decisions of councils on this point, the doctrine of the Church, the teaching of the Fathers and the divines, are familiar to every Catholic. All proclaim that Mary was a virgin when she conceived, a virgin when she brought forth her son, a virgin forever after.* The Church chants the praises of Mary as a virgin in a manner altogether peculiar and unknown to other virgins—*'Virgo singularis.'* And does not she alone wear the diadem of the Mother of the King of kings, by which she claims dominion over angels and saints? Did either nature or grace ever produce a virgin like Mary? Mary is most holy among the holy, most pure among the pure, a celestial wonder, the mirror of virtues, the miracle of the world, the joy of heaven and earth. She alone is Virgin and Mother; Virgin without example and without equal; Mother of the Author of grace. She is virgin in body, in mind, in look, in thought, in feelings, in word, and in work. As the eagle soars above all the feathered tribe, the Virgin Mary rises above all other virgins. Almighty God Himself, in various parts of Scripture, has exhibited under beautiful images the singular excellence of the virginity of Mary. She is the virgin rose that opens its purple-tinted bosom to the kindly influence of the heavenly

**St. Aug. de Cat. Rud. c. 22.*

dew; she is the lily among thorns that diffuses around an aroma of fragrance; she is the fair and innocent dove that reflects all the various colors of light in presence of the sun; she is the immortal palm, the incorruptible cedar, the triumphant laurel, the turpentine tree with spreading branches and dense foliage. She is figured as the terrestrial paradise, the tree of life, the well-enclosed garden, the sealed fountain, the mirror without blemish, the ark of Noe and of the covenant, the little cloud seen by Elias, the fleece of Gideon, the tabernacle and the Temple. She was the closed gate through which was to pass, without its being opened, the God made man, the consoler of the afflicted, the hope of Israel, the Saviour of the human race, the desire of all just souls; He was to throw open the gates of heaven closed by sin, and to fill with souls redeemed by Himself the seats left vacant by the rebellion of Lucifer. These and numberless others were the symbols which foreshadowed that illustrious maiden, who was chosen to be the Mother of God without suffering the slightest detriment to her virginal purity.

"Besides the symbols, there are innumerable passages in Scripture which allude to the virginity of Mary. Isaias clearly foretells that the Saviour should be born of a virgin. 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel' (Is. vii. 14). Again he said, 'There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him' (Is. xi. 1, 2). 'The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad; the wilderness shall rejoice, and flourish like the lily. It shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise; the glory

of Libanus is given to it; the beauty of Carmel and Saron: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the beauty of our God' (Is. xxxv. 1, 2). But while he described the blessings of redemption, he foreknew that Christ would be born of a virgin mother; and the honor of the Son redounds to the honor of the Mother. When the beauty of a flower is admired, the stem which produced it is praised; when the fruits of a tree are carefully watched and gathered, by the very act the good qualities of the tree itself, and the seed from which it arose, are commended. God, moreover, in the mystic explanation of the Church, called her all fair, and without stain of sin to tarnish her virginal innocence. Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee (Cant. iv. 7). Fair as the moon, bright as the sun (Cant. vi. 9). As there is no heavenly body more beautiful than the sun and the moon, so there is no creature more passing fair than the spotless Virgin Mary.

"But the claims of Mary to the title of Queen of virgins are not yet exhausted. She consecrated her body to God by a vow of perpetual virginity. This is the opinion of St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Ildefonsus, and all the Doctors of the Church. The holy Virgin was not ignorant that herself and all other creatures belonged entirely to God, because from Him they derived their being, and she wished to consecrate herself solemnly to Him in the presence of angels and men, on the day of her presentation in the Temple, when she was only three years of age. This resolution was inspired by the Holy Ghost, and she executed it with all the devotion and fervor of her soul. She loved God with her whole heart and her whole strength, and her only thought was to give Him pleasure. She knew also that the merit of

virginity is increased by the obligation of a vow to maintain it; and she chose the part which was more perfect, more secure, and more glorious to the Lord. Then were verified in her the words of the Holy Ghost, by whom she was already regarded as a spouse: 'My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up' (Cant. iv. 12). The Holy Spirit repeated twice the words, 'a garden enclosed,' because she was equally pure in body and soul; and to place her virginity in security she reared around it, by means of a perpetual vow, a powerful barrier, in order to break all the assaults of the unclean spirit of the abyss; and she strengthened this defense by intrusting it to the guardianship of humility, modesty, silence, and temperance. St. Augustine, and after him the Fathers and theologians, wishing to prove that the Blessed Virgin had consecrated her virginity to God by vow, bring forward her words to the angel, when he announced to her that she should be the mother of the Word Incarnate. 'How shall this be done, because I know not man?' (Luke i. 34). Mary by these words did not express a doubt that the mystery foretold by the angel would have its accomplishment; she wished merely to be informed of the manner in which it was to be accomplished, bearing in mind the vow of perpetual virginity which she had made from her earliest days. Her question to the angel is an evident proof that she had dedicated herself to God in soul and in body. If she was espoused to Joseph this was not the loss, but for the protection, of her virginity.

"Some, perhaps, before Mary, had the will to preserve the fair virtue of virginity, as Elias, Eliseus, Jeremias, and Daniel; but before her no one consecrated it to God, and bound the will forever by a perpetual vow. Under the old covenant a vow of

virginity, or rather sterility, a necessary consequence of it, was viewed as a reproach, a disgrace, and a curse to a family (Exod. xxiii. 26). When Rachel gave birth to Joseph, she exclaimed, 'God hath taken away my reproach!' (Gen. xxx. 23). When the daughter of Jepthe learned from her father that she was to be offered in sacrifice, in fulfilment of a vow which he had made to the Lord, she said to him: 'My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth to the Lord, do unto me whatsoever thou hast promised. Grant me only this which I desire: Let me go, that I may go about the mountains, and may bewail my virginity with my companions' (Judges xi. 36). Besides the disgrace of celibacy, the desire of giving birth to the Saviour of the world had seized upon the hearts of all Hebrew maidens. In the New Testament as soon as Mary unfolded the snow-white standard of virginity, innumerable bands of virgins immediately rallied around her. In the first bloom of their age they consecrated their hearts to God, and under the triumphant banner of the Virgin courageously and successfully combated against the devil and the flesh. Thus were fulfilled the words of the prophet when he sang to the sound of his golden harp: 'After her shall virgins be brought to the King; her neighbors shall be brought to Thee. They shall be brought into the temple of the King' (Ps. xliv. 15). Mary is therefore Queen of virgins, because she was the first to bind herself by perpetual vow to maintain unsullied the fair and angelic virtue of virginity."

CHAPTER LXXI.

The Imitation of Mary in Her Obedience and in Her Poverty.

The Obedience of Mary.

Next to the virtue of purity, Mary practiced that of obedience in the highest degree. Her will was perfectly submissive to the directions of her parents, of the priests of the Temple, of St. Joseph; she followed with docility every prescription of the Law of God; she hearkened to the words of the angel; and she never resisted the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. She rose up without delay to go to her cousin Elizabeth, and she never sought exemption from any one of the Mosaic laws. She subjected herself and her Son to the law of purification, which was not in any manner obligatory upon her, presenting herself in the Temple before the high priest, and offering her first-born to the Lord. Unresistingly she allowed herself to be led into Egypt by her chaste spouse, St. Joseph, although she was there to be reduced to the direst poverty.

Mary's whole life was marked by the most perfect obedience, but it shone forth most especially at three different epochs. First, she signally exercised the virtue of obedience when the angel announced to her the joyful tidings of the Incarnation of the Son of God in her chaste womb. "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the

throne of David His father: and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 31). The sweetest joy inundated the soul of Mary at these words, but she was silent; she was pondering their meaning. She was to become a mother, yet she was resolved to remain a virgin. She had vowed her virginity to God. What should she do? At last, she spoke: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" Her words signify: I wish to remain a virgin. What will the Lord God do to preserve my virginity if I become a mother? Then the angel answered: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore, also, the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, . . . because no word shall be impossible with God." Now did the holy Virgin take courage, and with perfect submission to the divine decrees, she exclaimed: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke i. 38).

Secondly, Mary's obedience shone forth on the day of the Passion of her divine Son, on the day of the ignominy of Jesus, Saviour of the world. Mary heard the imprecations hurled in wrath against Him. Every word was for her a sword of sorrow. At the foot of the cross was consummated her death-like agony. Other martyrs could, in the midst of their torments, fix their eyes on the glory of the risen Redeemer, and find therein encouragement, but here the loving heart of the Mother had to endure in the very highest degree all that served to increase the shame, the agony of her Son. There she stood, her riven heart suffering more than did the mother of Moses when she launched the cradle of her darling on the treacherous waves. more than

the aged Jacob when his streaming eyes rested in horror on the blood-stained mantle of his beloved Joseph, more than David when he longed to die for his son Absalom. Ah! that most tender of mothers, that most gentle of hearts, in the sight of the humiliations, the death-agony of her Son, has far surpassed in compassionate anguish the sorrows of all others. Who could measure her grief when she saw her Jesus fastened to the cross, crimsoned with His dripping blood! With that precious blood, which the earth drank in at the foot of the cross, were mingled the burning tears of the martyred Mother! When she saw the shadows of death gathering upon His forehead, when she beheld His head sinking upon His breast, when she heard His last sigh, ah! well might she exclaim: "O, all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow!" (Lam. i. 12.) In all these bitter sufferings of soul, Mary was submissive to the divine will.

After the Ascension of Our Lord, fresh sorrow, fresh sadness swept over the soul of the divine Mother, but each new wave found her bowing in submission to the heavenly Father. She alone could estimate the jewel, the treasure, that had been snatched from her by the Ascension of Jesus. O how she loved Him, her glorious one! Her tenderness for Him equaled her thanksgiving for all that He had done for the human race. But nevermore would it be given her to serve Him, to follow Him, to be personally near Him and in direct communication with Him as she had been accustomed to before His Passion. Yet Mary's obedience never swerved. She remained submissive in this vale of tears after her beloved Son had passed to eternal joy and glory. We have an example of similar

resignation to the divine will in the holy Bishop Martin. Being attacked by a serious illness, he told his disciples, who were standing around his bed weeping, that he was now going to die. In their grief at the prospect of losing him whom they all loved so much, they cried out: "Father, why do you leave us? To whom do you leave us in our sorrow? Ravenous wolves will fall on your flock, and who will save us from their fangs when our shepherd is dead? We know your desire to be with Christ, but your reward is secure, and it will be none the less for being delayed. Be touched by our great need, and think of the dangers in which you leave us." Martin mingled his tears with those of his disconsolate disciples, raised his eyes to heaven, and prayed: "Lord, if I am still necessary to Thy people, I do not refuse to work. Thy will be done!" Thus, even in his last moments, the will of God was the only rule of the saint's conduct.

Examine your own heart, and see to what extent you have gained a victory over self; how much progress you have made in the virtue of obedience. Follow the example of the Mother of God. Henceforth, renounce your own will and your own judgment to follow the will and be led by the direction of your Superior. Abandon yourself to the way of obedience, for "no way," says St. Teresa, "leads more quickly to perfection than the way of obedience," and nothing does Satan hate more than obedience. You must become as little children, else you can have no part in the kingdom of God.

The Poverty of Mary.

After Jesus Christ, the God-Man, who for love of us chose poverty, and that in order to en-

rich us with the highest gifts, there never lived a creature in whom poverty found a more worthy dwelling-place than the most blessed Virgin Mary. This we shall clearly understand when, from the teaching of the holy Fathers, we shall become convinced that true poverty consists not in being exteriorly poor, but in being interiorly divested of all love and desire for earthly goods.

One of the properties of divine love is to lead the soul to despise temporal goods, to find in God her most precious treasure, and to love Him as her highest good. The truly poor man is rich in God. Who can express how rich that man is who owns but God alone! "They have called the people happy that hath these things; but happy is that people whose God is the Lord" (Ps. cxliii. 15). No one is rich but he in whose soul God Himself deigns to dwell. He carries in himself the Source of all good, the Father of all treasures, the infinitely good and perfect God. The whole world is his. He is with God the master, the lord of creation. St. Paul knew the happiness of possessing God when he said: "I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord" (Phil. iii. 8). The Blessed Mother of God, the model of religious perfection, possessed the virtue of poverty in the highest degree. She despised the things of earth and trod them under foot, because the Lord was her inheritance and possession. She could say with the Psalmist: "Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever" (Ps. lxxii. 26): therefore was she well-pleasing to Almighty God, who lavished His graces on her as on no other. For all honors and prerogatives bestowed upon her the Holy Virgin was grateful. She praised the Giver

while she humbled herself, and the more she praised Him the more freely did He pour out on her the riches of His love.

The glorious example of her divine Son was for Mary a preeminent motive for practicing poverty of spirit. "Our Lord Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, "being rich, became poor for your sake, that through His poverty you might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). The Prophet Zacharias, also, calling upon Sion, says: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion! Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold thy King will come to thee the just and Saviour. He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zach. ix. 9). And St. Luke records of Jesus Christ: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Luke ix. 58). The example of Our Lord's poverty influenced the whole life of His blessed Mother. Her clothing was poor and plain, and the words of Holy Scripture may be aptly applied to her: "She hath sought wool and flax, and hath wrought by the counsel of her hands" (Prov. xxxi. 13). She was poor in her marriage with Joseph, the humble carpenter of Nazareth, a little city of Galilee. She was poor at the birth of her divine Child when, in a deserted stable, without attendants or help of any kind, she brought forth her Son and wrapped Him in the swaddling clothes common to the poor. She was poor in her offering when she presented her holy Child in the Temple. As she herself was poor and the Mother of a poor Child, who was to live and die poor, she redeemed Him with the offering of the poor, two turtle-doves. Mary was poor as long as she lived, poor in everything. She wanted to be poor while

on earth; that we, by her example, might become rich. She loved poverty, which, by divesting of temporal goods, obtains the riches of eternity.

As a Religious, you, also, must love poverty of spirit after Mary's example. Reflect on the greatness of the recompense that the divine Saviour has in store for those who leave all for His sake: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 3).

CHAPTER LXXII.

Mary, the Holy Mother of God.

1. Of the glorious birth of the holy Mother of God there is something told us in the old books. At the time when, in Jerusalem, King Herod had reigned about seventeen years, there lived in Nazareth a well-to-do man, called Heli, or Heliakim, or otherwise Joachim. He was of the house of the holy King David, and had married a woman of Bethlehem named Anna. They both lived justly before God, and walked without blame in the commandments of the Lord. They divided their means into three parts: the first part they gave to God for the Temple at Jerusalem, and for the priests of the Lord; the second they gave to the poor; the third they used for their own wants.

But they had no children, and this was a great grief to them. On one occasion, on the feast of the dedication of the Temple, Joachim went up to Jerusalem to pray. He wished to make his offering, but the priest turned him away, for he thought that God had cursed him, because "He had left him childless." This reproach gave the pious man much pain. He went away, and fasted with Anna, his wife; and together they fervently prayed that they might be blessed with a child. They promised that the child which God gave to them should be dedicated to His service. And God at last heard their pious prayers. Anna gave birth to a little daughter, who was chosen by God to be the Mother of His Son. This happened on September 8th, in the year 733 after the building of the city of Rome. Accord-

ing to ancient tradition, the birthday of the Mother of God was on a Sabbath, which is now the Saturday of the Christian week.

Of all other saints, the Church keeps the day of their death as their feast-day. Only of Our Lord, of the Mother of God, and of St. John the Baptist does she keep also the day of their birth. And this is done because these three holy persons alone were born without original sin, and were therefore already holy at their birth.

But the Church keeps up the birthday of the Blessed Virgin with so much greater pomp, because her birth brought the greatest blessing and joy to the whole world. For, first, she is the Mother of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ; she brought to us that salvation which poor humanity had sighed for, for four thousand years. Secondly, Mary has also become, in a spiritual way, the Mother of all Christians.

To all those who love her and honor her with devotion, she has always shown a motherly love; has taken them under her powerful protection, and has obtained many miracles for their good.

2. It was the custom of the Jews to name their new-born girls fifteen days after their birth. The name which the Mother of the world's Saviour was to bear was the sweet name of Mary. This name was chosen not by the parents of the child, but by God Himself. The holy teacher, St. Jerome, says: "The exalted name of Mary, which was bestowed on the Mother of God, came down from heaven; it was given to her by command of the Lord."

But when God gives a name, it is always full of deep truth and meaning for the one who receives it. So, indeed, is this holy name of the Mother of God. Mary means as much as "The Exalted," "The

Strong," "The Mighty," or also "The Lady" or "Mistress." And such is the Mother of God in very truth. She is the exalted one, for over and above her high dignity as the Mother of God there is nothing for a creature more exalted than the dignity of being, through grace, a child of God. She is the strong one, for, by the grace which she received from God, she has trodden upon the head of the old serpent, the wicked spirit, and crushed him, so that over her he can have no power. She is the mighty one, for, by her intercession with her divine Son, she is able to obtain help for all who love her, and honor her, and seek her help. She is Lady and Mistress, because she is the Mother of the Lord, who is King of heaven and earth. And so the name of the Mother of God has always been loved and revered by true and faithful Christians. Blessed Paul of the Cross never uttered it without baring his head and bending himself reverently, as though he were standing before the very throne of the Queen of heaven. The priest must bow his head in the holy Mass as often as he repeats the name of Mary. And so it came to pass that, even in the olden days, men celebrated the feast of "the name of Mary." It was taken up first in Spain, and had the sanction of Pope Leo X. in the year 1513; and since the year 1683 it has been kept up throughout the whole Catholic Church.

3. Of the childhood of the Mother of God there is nothing told us in the Holy Scriptures. It was not until later that the holy teachers of the Church put together what had been related from mouth to mouth about the days of Mary's childhood. And this is what they have written down:

The pious parents of Mary, Joachim and Anna, had vowed that the child which God might send

them should be dedicated to His service in the Temple of Jerusalem. Now, near to the Temple there was a house in which Jewish maidens were brought up. There they were instructed in the holy Law, learned all sorts of useful work, and had to make and cleanse the priestly vestments; and after they had been trained they went back again to their parents. To this house of training, and to the service of the Temple, the parents of Mary devoted their child. As she was now three years old, they took her to Jerusalem. They carried her up into the Temple, and presented her to God with all the usual ceremonies. Then they handed her over to the priests who had charge of the house of training. Mary now parted with her parents, and took her place in the community of girls. She was glad she had come to Jerusalem, for now she could serve God without hindrance, and alone.

She began at once with all diligence to learn her womanly work. She learned to spin and sew, and to embroider in gold and silk, for this was needed for the priests in God's service. She was also instructed in the sacred writings of the Old Testament. She learned to understand and to sing the psalms, and listened with attention and joy while the priests of God related the sacred history, and spoke, from the prophets, of the expected Saviour.

The tender little maiden got up at midnight and prayed for herself and for all God's people. In the morning she was up again early, and stayed long in prayer. Then she went to work till dinner-time. After that she read in the Holy Scriptures, until the time when the evening offering was made in the Temple. She went to that every day, and took part with great fervor in the singing of the psalms. She was always in the habit of praising God. Whenever

others saluted her she gave back to them the greeting, *"Deo Gratias,"* that is, "Thanks be to God." St. Jerome thinks that this beautiful expression had, in this way, its origin in Mary.

She was most loving to her companions. She served them with joy, helped them with their work, and often took the heaviest share of it upon herself. She was always gentle and patient. Wherever she saw people in trouble, or ill, she had tender compassion for them, and consoled and helped them where she could. But above all things she took care that none of her playmates should offend God by sin. St. Ambrose describes the childhood of Mary, and says: "She was maidenly in body and in soul, and humble of heart. She spoke little and modestly, and read diligently in the Holy Scriptures. She did not seek to be rich, but trusted in God, and worked with great zeal. She never troubled herself about the praises of men, but wished only to please God. She gave nobody pain, was kind to every one, showed respect for old age, and bore no envy against her equals. She avoided all self-praise, followed the voice of conscience, and loved to be virtuous. She never gave offense to her parents by a single look, never despised the poor, never laughed at infirm people, and never turned away from the needy. In her looks there was nothing unfriendly, in her words nothing frivolous, in her walk nothing unbecoming, in her voice nothing of harshness. Thus her bodily form was a beautiful image of her soul—an image of virtue. The life of Mary was so holy that it can be a pattern for all mankind."

While she abode in the Temple, the Mother of God made a vow never to be married but, as a virgin, to live for God alone, if it were pleasing to her divine Master. She stayed eleven years in Jeru-

salem. When she was fourteen years old she went back to her parents at Nazareth. She was espoused to St. Joseph, after she had learned that such was God's will. But after the espousal, while she tarried for a few weeks in the house of her parents, God sent the Archangel Gabriel, and made known to her that she was to be the Mother of the Saviour of the world. Mary submitted humbly to God's decree. And so the eternal Son of God became man, and dwelt among us.*

4. Mary became the Mother of God. "Rising up, she went into the mountainous country with haste, into a city of Juda; and she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb: and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and she cried out with a loud voice and said: Blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke i. 39-43.) And when Mary's days were accomplished that she should be delivered, she "brought forth her first-born Son" (Luke ii. 6, 7). And after eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, "which was called by the angel, before He was conceived in the womb" (21). And not long after, an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: "Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him" (Matt. ii. 13). And at the marriage in Cana of Galilee the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus said to Him: "They

*The preceding paragraphs are from *Flowers from the Catholic Kindergarten*, by the Rev. F. Hattler, S.J.

have no wine; and she saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye" (John ii. 1-5). And is it not written: "There stood by the cross of Jesus, His Mother and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene"? (John xix. 25.) Resting upon these reasons and these authorities, the Church cut off from her communion those who, with heretical wickedness, should attempt to take away from the glory of Mary by denying that she was the Mother of God (Council of Ephesus, an. 431).

Commenting on Mary's dignity as the Mother of God, Father Ferran, in his *Month of Our Lady* (translated by the Rev. Dr. John F. Mullany), says: Mary, being the Mother of God, is evidently exalted in dignity above all creatures. Although she is of most illustrious race, of the blood of the patriarchs, and of the royal family of David, this is naught in comparison with the nobility, incomparably greater, which she acquires from her Son (St. Pet. Damascene). The more noble the son is, the greater the honor of the mother; and the Son of Mary being of infinite dignity and authority, the honor of His Mother must be almost immeasurable. She alone can say with the Eternal Father to the Eternal Son: "Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten Thee" (Ps. ii. 7). The Father says to Jesus, by the mouth of the Prophet: "Thou art My Son in virtue of eternal generation." Mary, by the Evangelist, says also to Jesus: "Thou art my Son in virtue of generation in time." And, as the tree is known by its fruits, the dignity of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is almost infinite (Alb. Mag.). Great is the elevation of Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominations, Powers, Cherubim, and Seraphim; but they are all

far inferior to Mary. Great are the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Confessors, but Mary is their Queen. "Mary," says St. Gregory the Great, "is the mountain of Isaias on the summit of the other mountains; for she transcends in loftiness of glory all angels and men. Mary is the silvery moon that illuminates by night the path of the traveler. Mary is the sun that by its effulgence eclipses the light of all the stars, and rules in splendor as if the stars had no existence. Fair as the moon, bright as the sun."

The intimate union also between Mary and God declares the sublimity of her dignity. Christ, the Son of God, received his human nature from Mary. By her divine maternity, therefore, Mary is most closely united with the infinite person of Christ; hence accrues to Mary a dignity almost infinite.

"Mary," according to St. John Damascene, "by becoming the Mother of the Creator, became at once the Queen of all creatures." "Hence," says Gerson, "there belongs to Mary a kind of natural dominion over the whole universe." "All creatures," says St. Bernard, "in whatever rank of being, whether merely spiritual, as angels; or rational, as men; or corporeal, as purely material beings; all in the heavens and on the earth, and in the places under the earth, that are subject to the omnipotent dominion of God, are subject also to the authority of the holy Virgin Mary." The Church sanctions these assertions by saluting Mary as Queen of heaven, Queen of angels, Queen of the world.

Mary is the Mother of Christ by nature and she is at the same time the Mother of all Christians by grace. Mary is not only our Mother in name, but she performs every day the part of a most loving mother. In the kingdom of glory she implores her

Son continually in our behalf, for it is He who has consigned us to her as children. If Christ is our Advocate with His Father, she is our advocate with her Son, Christ Jesus, our Saviour. She is the Mother of grace for the just man, that he may persevere and advance in the way of virtue; and she is the Mother of mercy for the sinner who has the will to be converted to God. To all she says in the words of divine wisdom: "I am the Mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and of the truth: in me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits" (Ecclus. xxiv. 24, 26). "Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors. He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord" (Prov. viii. 34, 35). "Mary," says one of her devout servants, "loves us ardently because she adopted us as children, and wishes us to call her Mother of love." No precept has been given to parents to love their children. This is a love of natural necessity. Wild beasts even are taught by nature to love their own offspring. "Can a woman," says Isaias, "forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb?" And if she should forget, yet will not Mary forget us. She ardently desired to die with Jesus out of love for us, whom He so excessively loved. "The Son was expiring on the cross," says St. Ambrose, "and Mary was in spirit offering herself to die with Him for our benefit."

The love of Mary for men arises from her love for God. The love of God and the love of our neighbor are embraced in the same precept. "This commandment we have from God, that he who

loveth God must love also his brother" (1 John iv. 21). The more love for God increases, the more increases the love of our neighbor. What did not an Alphonsus Liguori perform in the kingdom of Naples, a Charles Borromeo in the territory of Milan, or a Father Damien among the lepers? And why? Because they were inflamed with a strong and active love for God. But in love for God Mary far excels all the saints; therefore in love of her neighbor Mary is more ardent and earnest than they were. Mary loves us because we are her children, given to her by the dying Saviour. And she loves us fervently, because Jesus Christ has purchased us at the infinite price of His Passion and death. She knows full well that her Son came into the world to seek and save that which was lost. She knows that Jesus Christ, although God, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man; that He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Mary must, then, love those whom God loves; and as God loves in order to save, and most ardently desires that we all be saved, Mary is for us a loving mother, whose whole solicitude is employed to conduct us to heaven.

"In the olden days," says Father Hattler, "when sailors traveled out upon the wide and open seas, and wished to know in what direction they should steer their ship in the darkness, they had to fix their eyes upon a certain star in the heavens called the pole-star, or the 'Star of the sea.' The life of a Christian is like unto a voyage over an unsafe and stormy ocean: it is full of dangers and snares, which can sink men into the depths of sin and eternal damnation. But Mary,

with her example, and with her helpful intercession, is like a guiding star. The Christian, during life, should look up to her; he should put her example before him, try to imitate her, and pray for her help. Whoever does that can never be lost. Therefore has Mary been justly called 'The Star of the sea;' and it is a beautiful discourse which St. Bernard once made about this. In it he says: 'Mary means as much as "Star of the sea." This name is most justly fitting to the Virgin Mother. She is that bright gleaming star which rises above the wide, vast ocean, shining with her merits, and shedding light by her example. Turn not thine eyes away from the light of this star if thou wouldst not be buried in the waves.'

"When thou seest thyself upon the stream of time, tossed between wind and wave, rather than treading upon the firm earth, look up to the Star: call, 'Mary!'

"When pride, or ambition, or calumny, or envy, like the wild waves, toss thee hither and thither, look up to the Star: call, 'Mary!'

"When thy heart, with anger, or sinful desires, is whipped about like a little ship in a tempest, then look up to the Star: call, 'Mary!'

"When the greatness of thy sins affrights thee, or the horror of thy conscience makes thee ashamed, and thou beginnest to feel thyself in the grasp of despair, as in a whirlpool, dragged down and down into the abyss, then look up to the Star: call, 'Mary!' In danger, in anxiety, in doubts, think of Mary, call on Mary: let her name be ever on thy lips, let it always abide in thy heart.

"But to win her intercession, depart not from the pattern of her life. Only follow her, and thou wilt never go astray; call upon her, and thou wilt not

despond; think of her, and thou wilt not falsely judge. If she takes thee by the hand, thou canst not fall; if she protects thee, thou canst know no fear; under her guidance thou wilt never weary; with her favor thou wilt be landed happily. So mayest thou learn, in thy own self, how true it is what is written: 'And the name of the Virgin was Mary, that is, Star of the sea!'"

How devotional, how beautiful, how helpful is the hymn, "*Ave Maris Stella*"! Say it frequently with great attention and devotion.

Ave maris stella,
Dei Mater alma,
Atque semper virgo,

Felix cœli porta.
Sumens illud Ave,

Gabrielis ore,

Funda nos in pace,

Mutans Hevæ nomen.
Solve vincla reis,

Profer lumen cæcis,
Mala nostra pelle,

Bona cuncta posce.
Monstra te esse matrem,
Sumat per te preces,
Qui pro nobis natus

Tulit esse tuus.

Virgo singularis,

Inter omnes mitis,
Nos culpis solutos,
Mites fac et castos.

Bright Mother of Our Maker, hail!
Thou Virgin ever blest,
The ocean's Star by which we sail,
And gain the port of rest!
Whilst we this *Ave* thus to thee
From Gabriel's mouth rehearse,
Prevail, that peace our lot may be,
And *Eva's* name reverse.
Release our long-entangled mind
From all the snares of ill;
With heavenly light instruct the blind,
And all our vows fulfil.
Exert for us a Mother's care,
And us thy children, own;
Prevail with Him to hear our prayer,
Who chose to be thy Son.

O spotless Maid! whose virtues shine
With brightest purity;
Each action of our life refine,
And make us pure like thee.

Vitam præsta puram,
Inter para tutum,
Ut videntes Jesum,
Semper collætemur.

Sit laus Deo Patri,
Summo Christo decus,
Spiritui sancto,
Tribus honor unus. Amen.

Preserve our lives unstained from ill,
And guard us in our way;
That Christ, one day, our souls may fill
With joys that ne'er decay.

To God the Father, endless praise:
To God the Son, the same;
And Holy Ghost, whose equal rays
One equal glory claim.
Amen.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.

THE pleasing little incidents of the interview in which His Holiness Pope Pius X. granted official recognition to the title "Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament" are thus recorded in *Emmanuel*, March, 1906: A prelate of Canada, whose devotion toward the Holy Eucharist is equaled only by his benevolence, Mgr. Gautier, Archbishop of Kingston, was recently in Rome. The Superior-General of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament, Very Rev. Father Estévenon, whose headquarters are at the church of Saint Claude, a spot well known to the pilgrims to the Eternal City, suggested to His Grace to petition the Holy Father, in behalf of the faithful of his diocese, to grant an indulgence for the recitation of the little prayer: "Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Mother and Model of adorers, pray for us!"

Pleased with the idea, His Grace drew up a petition in writing to present to His Holiness in an audience appointed for him on December 30th. The new title was to be "Our Lady's new year's gift."

But behold what happened! During the interview, having obtained from the Holy Father permission to read his carefully worded petition, the Archbishop could not find it. In vain did he search his pockets, in vain were those of his overcoat, which he had left in the antechamber, turned inside out. Great was the embarrassment of the good prelate, and he began *viva voce* to lay before His Holiness the substance of his stray petition.

At once, smiling and earnest, with that kind and obliging readiness habitual to him, Pius X. took up his pen and, without an instant's hesitation, wrote the text given below. Then, after signing it, he handed it to His Grace of Kingston, who could scarcely find words to express his delight and gratitude.

"Cunctis qui coram SS.mo Sacramento publicæ adorationi exposito recitaverint hanc iaculatoriam: '*Domina Nostra SS.mi Sacramenti, ora pro nobis,*' Indulgentiam trecentorum dierum concedimus.

"PIUS PP. X.

"Die 30 mensis Decembris, an. 1905."

By this rescript an indulgence of three hundred days is granted to all who recite the prayer: "Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, pray for us!" before the sacred Host exposed for adoration.

On Our Lady and the Eucharist, Father Faber writes as follows: "Who can doubt that there is a close and invariable connection between devotion to our dear Mother and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament? The force of terms would be enough to prove it. The lives of the saints and the teaching of spiritual books are both full of it. But we do not need them for proofs, for the experience of every one of us proves it decisively to ourselves at least. We have felt and known that in proportion as we loved our blessed Lady, our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament grew more tender and more reverent, and the more we were with the Blessed Sacrament, even without seeming to think of Mary, the more an intense devotion to her took possession of the very depths of our heart. This is a phenomenon which is universal throughout the life of the Church, and which needs no further commentary than the remembrance that one is the Mother and one the Son.

"Never was mere creature exalted to such a posi-

tion of power and empire as was Mary, made Mother of mankind at the foot of the cross, when her woes were consummated and her heart broken, and yet she miraculously lived. But here again the light of the sacred infancy is on her. It is as Mother of God that she becomes Mother of men as well. It is because she bore Him that she had a right to share with Him what He endured for us. Again, when at Pentecost she, who was all light already, was inconceivably illuminated and gifted by the Holy Ghost, is was as the Mother of the Word that she became Queen of the apostles of the Word. The glory of her death of love was also the earthly crown of the annunciation, and the mystery of the assumption involved the heavenly crown whereby Our Lord paid her for the delightful ministries of her maternal love. Of course, all these four mysteries have a beauty and a glory and a significance of their own; yet they are what they are, their full beauty and dignity belongs to them, because of the mysteries of the sacred infancy.

"Our Lady's life may be divided into four mysteries preceding the Incarnation, the immaculate conception, the nativity, the presentation, and the espousals; then into the four great mysteries of the sacred infancy, the annunciation, visitation, nativity, and presentation; and then into four mysteries subsequent, her compassion, Pentecost, her death, and her assumption. These are her twelve stars. Between the sacred infancy and the cross there intervene four mysteries of shadow and of deepest import, full of glory but a hidden glory or rather a seeming shame. These I call the eclipse of Mary, wherein she is most especially likened to her Son, and drinks deepest of the similitudes of the Incarnation. They are the finding in the Temple, the mar-

riage at Cana, Jesus leaving Nazareth to begin His ministry, and His words when He was told that she was at the door. Full as they are of doctrine and devotion, these four mysteries do not concern us now. What I wish to point out here is that the fountains of her honor are in the four great mysteries of the sacred infancy — the annunciation, whereby she became the Mother of God; the visitation, which implies His life in the womb; the nativity, when He put Himself into her hands; and the presentation, when He enabled her to offer to God an offering as immense as God Himself: and these four mysteries cast a light on the four that precede the sacred infancy and the four that follow it; and the four mysteries of her eclipse would be no mysteries at all but for her divine maternity. Then I argue thus: The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is the same as the devotion to the sacred infancy. But devotion to the sacred infancy is in fact devotion to our blessed Lady. Therefore devotion to our blessed Lady is devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Judge whether I prove this sufficiently.

"Those whose spirit leads them to look at everything as it comes from Jesus, as His doing, or permitting, or willing, base their devotion to our blessed Lady simply on the will of her Son; and while they by no means think lightly of the decrees of God, the intrinsic rights of the divine maternity, or the theological conveniences which we learn in the schools, nevertheless, they repose the devotion to our blessed Lady on these three axioms or facts: 1. Jesus did not come without her. 2. When He came, He made the access to Him lie through her. 3. When He went, He left her to be to the Church what she had been to Him, and, in fact, always works in the Church by her, and never without her. Now, look at the first

fact: Jesus did not come without her. She was an integral part of the plan of redemption, not a mere ornament, as some speak. Can anything be merely ornamental in any work of God? It may be doubted whether it is consistent with reverence to say so. The first thing that meets us in the sacred infancy is that He will not be incarnate without her consent. That there was the Incarnation was owing to her consent, and therefore that there was the Blessed Sacrament, which is a daily and hourly renewal of the Incarnation, is owing to her consent. What is present in the Blessed Sacrament by the force of consecration is just what He took from Mary, and only that His flesh and blood. All else is present by concomitance.

"Let us come to the second fact. When He came, He made access to Him lie through her. When St. John the Baptist was to be sanctified, it was through her that the grace came. She was, as it were, deputed to confer on him the insignia of innocence. When the simple shepherds came to worship the new-born King in Bethlehem, Our Lady stood guardian by the manger. When the learned kings of the East knelt to make their mystic offerings to the omnipotent Child, it was on Mary's lap they found Him. Her knees were the seat of wisdom. If they kissed the Saviour's feet, it was she who interpreted His will, and permitted the familiarity and the grace. So, too, in the Blessed Sacrament, the light of her dignity shines upon the priests of her Son, and what was once her single prerogative has become the office and the right of multitudes. For what is Benediction but repeating what was done to the shepherds and the kings? Only in this, as in all things else, the Blessed Sacrament multiplies and enriches the first

privileges of the Incarnation; and, whereas this happened once to the shepherds and once to the kings, it now happens many times a day all the world over, and freely to mixed multitudes of good and bad.

"Turn to the third fact. He always works in the Church by her, and never without her. In dogma it has passed almost into a proverb that the doctrine about Mary shields the doctrine about Jesus, and contains it as she once contained Himself. In ritual they are never separated. In devotion they have grown together; and in great ecclesiastical epochs her action has been manifested to the Church in countless ways, both natural and miraculous. As M. Olier and his school have long since been prominent in teaching, just as St. Bernard taught in his doctrine about the mystical neck of the Church, Our Lord never seems to act in any notable way in the Church, without our tracing the instrumental hand and power of Mary. So it was in the sacred infancy; the world was governed through and from her, as the world is governed at this hour through and from the species of the Blessed Sacrament. So that if you examine it reverently and minutely the sacred infancy is itself a picture of the Blessed Sacrament and of Mary in the Church; the Blessed Sacrament images the sacred infancy and Mary in the Church; and Mary in the Church is best seen, best explained, and best commented upon by the Blessed Sacrament and the sacred infancy. How far does experience bear out what has been said? Why, to so great an extent that in the devout life it is almost the same thing to say of a man that he has a great devotion to our blessed Lady, or that he has a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

"What is all sweetness in communion, all joy at Benediction, all inward fluttering of the ravished

heart before the tabernacle, but the antitype of this delightful mystery of the Visitation? Has it not always been Mary that brought Him to us? Look at our past lives. When did we come to love Jesus so burningly, so enthusiastically, as we do now; when was it, and where, and how, and what reminiscences are mingled with it all? O my Mother! my Mother! I see as it were threads of gold running ever through the web of my past life. They are the threads of thy love, thou who hast been my providence. I never have a communion but to thee I owe it. The tabernacle, the pyx, the monstrance—the very beauty of the mystery is that it is thy Jesus, and not another, the body that was formed from thee, and not a new one, which consecration brings. When I come to thee on thy feasts, to look at thyself, to admire thy beauty, to praise thy grace, to glorify God for all thy gifts, to kneel before thee and tell thee all my heart in prayer, for thou art omnipotent in thine intercession, thou hast Jesus with thee, and makest me feel Him even when haply I was not thinking of Him in my mind, though surely I am always loving Him in my heart.

"All our best life, all our spiritual life, is nothing but a succession of visitations, visitations from Mary bringing Jesus with her; but nowhere is the similitude so faithful as it is in the Blessed Sacrament. How often, when we come near to the tabernacle, a secret fire comes forth, and our hearts burn within us without apparent cause. Cares fall off, tears are dried, doubts melt away, temptations are paralyzed, anxieties are allayed, our soul is bathed in quiet, sudden jubilee. Joy, exultation, praise, delight, the sense of forgiveness and the spirit of worship—these are exactly the fruits produced within us, as they were produced in the Baptist's soul.

"There is no one to whom the mere vicinity of the Blessed Sacrament has not been the cause of unnumbered blessings."

"It does not follow," writes Père Eymard, "because it is our special office to honor the Eucharist that we should lessen our devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Far from it. He would be truly displeasing to Jesus who should say: 'The Eucharist is enough for me; I do not need Mary.' Where do we find Jesus upon earth? Is it not in the arms of Mary? Is it not she who has given us the Blessed Eucharist? It was her acquiescence in the Incarnation of the Son of God—the divine Word—that began the great mystery of reparation to God and of the union with us that Jesus accomplished during His mortal life, and that He continues in the Eucharist. The more we love the Eucharist, the more we shall love Mary. We love what our friend loves, and where is creature so loved by God, mother so tenderly loved by son, as Mary was by Jesus? If we owe reverence to Jesus, we owe it to Mary also. If we adore Him, we must honor her, and to correspond to, as well as to enter fully into, the graces of our vocation, we owe to Mary a special devotion as to Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament. When we honor Our Lord on the cross, we pray to Our Lady of sorrows; in the life at Nazareth, it is Our Lady of the hidden life who is our model. What was the occupation of Mary in the cenaculum? She was in almost constant adoration. She was the Model and Queen and Mother of all adorers; she was, in a word, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus left her, so to say, fifteen years or more on earth after His Ascension in order that we might learn from her how to adore and serve Him perfectly. Oh, how beau-

tiful must have been those years spent in adoration!

"At Bethlehem, Mary was first to adore her divine Son lying in the manger. After her came St. Joseph and the shepherds and kings, but it was Mary who first laid this train of fire, the fire of divine love that should encircle the earth. She continued to adore Him in His hidden life, in His apostolic life, and in His suffering life on Calvary. Study the character of Mary's adoration. She adores Him in all the states of His life, and not in a sterile and monotonous adoration. She adores Him poor at Bethlehem, toiling at Nazareth, and later, teaching and converting sinners. She has adored Him upon Calvary and suffered with Him. Her love follows all the sentiments of Our Lord, which were known and divined by her, and into which her sympathetic love made her enter in entire conformity.

"To you, also, adorers of the Blessed Sacrament, I say, adore always, but vary your adoration as Mary varied hers. Enter into and revive all these mysteries in the Eucharist. Without this, you will fall into routine, and if your adoration is not regulated and varied by some new thought or motive you will become weary and stupid in your prayers.

"It was thus Mary recalled, on the anniversaries of these mysteries that had been accomplished before her eyes, their circumstances, their lessons, and their graces. She reminded Jesus by them of His great love for us. We do not always speak to a friend of the present; we recall pleasing souvenirs of the past and we contemplate the future. The Eucharist is the compendium of all these mysteries, and renews their graces and their love.

"Mary had such a love for the Blessed Sacrament that she could scarcely bear to separate herself from

it; she lived in the Blessed Sacrament and passed days and nights before the altar. She must certainly have lent herself to the needs of the apostles and the faithful who sought her aid, but her love for her hidden God shone out upon her countenance and communicated this ardor to those who approached her. Let us honor Mary under the title of 'Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.' Yes, let us say, with confidence and love, 'Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, Mother and Model of all adorers, pray for us who have recourse to you!' "

CHAPTER LXXIV.

Mary Immaculate.—The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

THE work of our Redemption—Christianity in its final analysis—must always bring us back to Mary. She was the first gentle flower to bloom forth in the springtime of the new era, that wondrous plant that bore her fruit in motherhood, but still retained the blossom of her virginity. The name "Mary" is interpreted as the "bitterness of the sea," but the bitterness of her life was all her own: to us she became the Star of the sea, leading us on to our glorious destination. "All generations," she says, "shall call me blessed." Twice blessed, rather; for virginity and fruitful maternity are woman's greatest blessings, and Mary, the virginal Mother of the Man of men, became, in the birth of her first-born, the spiritual Mother of us all. Such a singular combination of prerogatives simply defies exaggeration. No eulogist of her, however perfect, but can say: "Condescend to hear my praises, O sacred Virgin, and give me strength against thy enemies."

In the history of God's chosen people special mention is made of five women who, at different times, were the joy and the crown of their age: Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron, who led the Israelites through the Red Sea, chanting the while her *Magnificat* to the Lord; Abigail, the wife of Nabal, David's enemy, whose eloquence and beauty so touched the king's heart that he spared her husband and her people, and styled her blessed among women; Ruth, whom filial devotion led far from

home and fatherland, and whose faithfulness finally gained for her first place in her master's love and house; Judith, who having slain Holofernes, the scourge of her people, was styled by them "the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel;" and finally Anna, the mother of Samuel—Samuel whom she wrung from God by prayers and tears, only to return him magnanimously to the Lord. Now it is a singular fact, providential surely, that the initial letters of these five names, Mary, Abigail, Ruth, Judith and Anna, taken in order spell the name Maria; the name of her in whom were focused all the virtues of those that preceded her and those that followed; who was second only to the Man-God. If a greater than John the Baptist was never born of woman in the Old Law, surely, with the single exception of Christ, a greater than Mary was never born of woman in the New. The painter Zeuxis, we are told, depicted his ideal woman by copying the various graces of many models into one figure, and ancient mythology has it that each divinity lent a charm to grace the queen of love. A myth, yes, but a myth founded on a fact, on Mary's creation. She is that Ruth whose loving heart recked not of home or country but only of her people and her Lord; she is that Judith who slew man's bitterest foe when she crushed the head of the serpent; she is that Abigail by whose eloquent beauty the wrath of the King of kings was turned to mercy. The Child of her prayers she gave, like Anna, freely to the Lord; but most of all she is that Mary who alone of mortals passed through the sea of this sinful world dry-shod and without a stain. Man may say that but for Eve Adam had never sinned; he may point to his sex deified in the person of the Saviour; but still, speaking of the purely mortal, we can and do turn to a

woman, to Mary, and salute her in the words of the poet as: "Our tainted nature's solitary boast."

In the Apocalypse Mary is described as the woman clothed with the sun of God's effulgent grace, the moon, the changeful moon, under her feet, and on her head a crown of stars, the brightest star of them all her Immaculate Conception. Alone of mortals, she, from the instant of her creation, was preserved from the stain of original sin. We read that the Prophet Jeremias and John the Baptist were sanctified in their mothers' wombs, but still each was created, each conceived, in sin. In fact, with Mary as a solitary exception, every child of Adam is heir to Adam's guilt. In the beginning God made man right, says Ecclesiasticus, right with the rectitude of order, his soul and its higher powers subject to God, his lower nature subject to his reason and will, and the whole visible universe subject to the composite man. The world was then an earthly paradise, no labor, no want, no affliction from without, no misery from within, but happiness and immortality here, and the assured vision of God hereafter. But man, like the angels, was tried, and man, like the angels, fell. The angels sought equality with God in power, and man, equally guilty, sought equality with God in knowledge. And as in their case so in other and all cases; self-exaltation ended in humiliation, for God anathematized man and freed his subjects from their allegiance to him. "Cursed be the earth," He said; "thorns and thistles will it bear thee. Thou shalt labor and toil all the days of thy life, and as dust thou art, so unto dust thou shalt return." Original sin, with its effects, was the complete subversion of the primitive harmony established between God and man, between man's higher and lower natures, and between man

and the world; and this sin and its effects we all inherit. "Behold," says the Psalmist, "I was conceived in iniquities, and in sin did my mother conceive me." And St. Paul adds, "As by one man sin entered this world, and by sin death; so death hath passed upon all men from him in whom all men have sinned." As the wages of sin is death, and as all men die, we must naturally conclude that all men are conceived children of wrath in original sin. It stains the unborn, and the newly born; it stains man in whatever stage of unbaptized existence he may be, for only sin excludes from happiness, and Christ has said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can never enter the kingdom of heaven." The Church attests this fundamental dogma by celebrating the feasts of the saints, not on the day when in sin they came into this world, but on the day of their death, when, sinless, they passed to glory. St. Jerome discourages inquiry as to how original sin is transmitted, saying: "It is as though one fallen overboard were asked, 'How came you there?' and should reply, 'Ask not how I came here, but seek rather how you may get me out.'"

Anyhow, our natures were corrupted in Adam and Eve as waters in their source, with this difference, that human nature is not purified in transmission. As the different members of my body may become guilty of crime, though not acting by their own volition but under the influence of my perverse will, so we, as we are of the great body of humanity, contract the guilt of a sin of which the head alone was guilty. Adam and Eve were a representative committee of two, chosen from the myriads of human possibilities. Theirs was a test case; their fate our fate; so that we all share in their sin and punishment as we should have shared in

their happiness had they remained faithful to God. One single exception is recorded—the Virgin Mary. Of her alone we can say with the Canticle: "All beautiful art thou and there is no stain in thee." In St. John's vision of her the moon under her feet denotes the absence in her of all stain or change—denotes her to be as Longfellow styles her: "The peerless queen of air, who as sandals to her feet, the silver moon doth wear."

For us Catholics the ultimate proof that Mary was immaculately conceived must ever be the fact that for centuries this truth was accepted by the entire Catholic world, and defined at last as an article of our faith by Pius IX. in 1854. Nor are we without reasons for the faith that is in us. This privilege of Mary was foreshadowed in the words of God to the demon-seducer of our first parents: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed, and she shall crush thy head." We can readily understand the enmity between Mary's Son and Satan, but that Mary herself should, as promised, vanquish the serpent, is explainable only on the theory that she was never for an instant subject to him by sin, that she was immaculately conceived. Jesus and Mary were prefigured in Adam and Eve—they are as like as the light of to-day and to-morrow, and yet they differ as the waning twilight from the coming dawn. Adam's hands, outstretched toward the forbidden fruit, point to death and darkness; the hands of Christ in Gethsemane, receiving from the angel the chalice of His sufferings, point to life and light: and it was not until the water from the side of Christ on the cross trickled down on Adam's skull that life met death in Baptism. Adam was made of immaculate earth, as yet uncursed—a true figure of the stainless Virgin

who was to conceive and bear the Saviour. "Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord," says the Psalmist; and Mary's body was the house of the Lord; the material from which He built Him an earthly habitation. Christ was the wisdom of the Father, and Holy Writ has it that "wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul nor dwell in a body subject to sin." To deny the Immaculate Conception of Mary is, to my mind, scarcely less blasphemous than to assert that the humanity of Christ Himself was stained with original sin, for did He not become flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone? And who does not recoil in horror from the thought that even the adorable body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the altar should have had its origin in anything defiled by sin? The Immaculate Conception of Mary is a necessary corollary of Christ's absolute sinlessness. It was asserted by John the Baptist when he refused to baptize the Saviour in the Jordan. It was asserted by Christ Himself when He demanded of His enemies: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin? And what fellowship is there of God with Belial?"

But apart from her divine Son, Mary in the Scripture vindicates in her own person this article of our faith. Mary's destiny was to undo what Eve had done, and whatever in the order of grace Eve lost Mary regained. Mary is the direct antithesis of Eve. *Ave, Eva,* even their names are an inversion, the one of the other. It was due to God's dignity and power that His fair creation should be restored by exactly the same means wherewith by the demon it had been destroyed. Eve sprang from Adam and became his mother in error and death; Mary sprang from God and became the Mother of the Man-God—the truth and the life. Eve con-

sented to the prince of darkness, but it was to an angel Mary said: "Be it done unto me according to thy word." Mary brought forth her Son without loss of virginity and without pain, whereas had she ever even for an instant been the subject of original sin God's words would have been verified of her as of every daughter of Eve: "I will multiply thy sorrows and in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." Eve came to fill the world with the thorns and thistles of human afflictions, but the Canticle, speaking of Mary's conception, says: "The winter is now past, the rain is over and gone, and the flowers have appeared in our land." She is the flower of the field and the lily of the valley. "As the lily among the thorns," says the Canticle, so is Mary among the daughters of Eve. She is the fleece of Gideon, bathed in the heavenly dew, while all around was parched with the breath of hell. Upon Mary, says the Psalmist, grace came down as the dew upon the fleece, and from her it spread broadcast, and was increased by the preaching of the Apostles and their successors, until it became as showers gently falling upon all the land, for their sound hath gone forth into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world. She is the ark of Noe, unsubmerged by the universal deluge of sin; alone on the world of waters, a solitary refuge for the remnant of mankind.

There is one more text of Scripture from many that might be adduced concerning the Immaculate Conception. In the sixth Canticle we read: "Who is she that cometh forth as the dawn; fair as the moon, bright as the sun; terrible as an army set in array?" All the beauties of Nature, of the day, of the night, and of the intervening time—the aurora—are here attributed to Mary. She came as the dawn, pure

and sweet, with the promise of a glorious day. St. Francis of Assisi loved to meditate gazing on the rising sun: "For," said he, "with the eye of faith I can see therein the dawn of man's Redemption." It was another and beautiful way of saying that he loved to meditate on Mary's Immaculate Conception. "Fair as the moon." In all nature there is nothing lovelier than the pale queen of night, as with stately tread she ascends the throne of heaven, while the stars, like flowers, strew her royal way. She shines with a borrowed light, 'tis true, as Mary did, but still star differs from star in glory, and Mary is the brightest of them all. And lest we should imagine that, like the moon, there is any spot or change in her, the Canticle adds that Mary is bright as the sun. One and the same halo surrounds Mary and the Child in her arms. If a brief vision of God on Mount Sinai made the face of Moses shine like the sun, what shall we say of Mary, who for thirty long years basked in the smiles of the Saviour? Through her the light of divine truth and the warmth of divine love suffused this world, thawing out the congealed heart of the sinner and starting up the rivulets of human sympathy. Finally, to the powers of darkness she is terrible as an army set in array. As the shadows of night fly westward in confusion before the dawning aurora, so the demons before the coming of Mary; for she was the first to throw off the yoke of Satan, the first to put his forces to flight.*

The Rev. Charles Coppens, S.J., in an article in the *American Ecclesiastical Review* for May, 1904, the year in which the Church celebrated the golden jubilee of the definition of the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception, advances this argument:

*From Baxter's *Sermons from the Latins.*

"That God could exempt a soul from contracting the stain of Adam's sin, no man can deny; that He should have wished to do so in the case of the most highly favored among His creatures, was most perfectly suitable to His infinite wisdom and goodness. What Christian father would not, if he could, bestow such a favor on his favorite child? What dutiful son would refuse to exempt his mother from the disgrace of becoming a bondwoman to his bitterest enemy? What honorable man would not share his own stainless honor with his beloved spouse? And is not Mary the favorite Daughter of God the Father; the blessed Mother of God the Son; and the beloved Spouse of the Holy Ghost? Was it to be expected that Christ, who came to destroy sin, should leave the stain of it to defile, for a time, His own Mother's soul? As He was a totally sinless man, so, as was most proper, He made His blessed Mother a totally sinless woman. Having shed His sacred blood to wash away the stain of sin, He ordinarily applies His merit to each soul in Baptism; but to His Mother's soul He applies it at the moment of creation. She, therefore, owes all her sinlessness to Him; she shared in his Redemption, but in a more excellent manner than all other men."

"Against those," writes Father Lambing in his excellent booklet, *The Immaculate Conception*, "who would argue that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception would go to prove that Mary was not actually redeemed, and that consequently her exemption from the sin of Adam was contrary to the whole economy of God's dealings with man, Dr. Ullathorne reasons in this masterly way: He who in the face of the universal law gave sanctity to the soul of John the Baptist before he was born, could

give sanctity to the soul of Mary at the moment of its conception. But in that case, was Mary a child of redemption? Was she the offspring of His glorious blood? Most assuredly was she redeemed by His blood. Her redemption was the very masterpiece of His redeeming wisdom. It presents one instance more, the very noblest, of that law of accumulation of excellences, as the one absolutely perfect work of redemption. For, to enter upon the celebrated argument of Scotus, Our Lord is the universal Redeemer and most perfect Mediator. Must we not, then, look for some most complete and exquisite example of His mediatorial and redeeming powers? An example of such surprising excellence that a greater can not be imagined? And if He has not wrought that absolutely perfect redemption in His blessed Mother, of whom alone it is predicated, has He yet put forth in any case His full powers of redemption?

"He who prevents the disease is a greater physician than he who cures it after it has been contracted. He is the greater redeemer who pays the debt that it may not be incurred, than he who pays it after it has fallen on the debtor. It is a greater good to save us from sin that we may not sin, than to save us from sin after we have sinned. It is a more blessed mediation to prevent us lest we should offend the majesty of God, than to appease His anger after we have offended. And so St. Bernard says of the angels who stood, that Christ saved them by His grace, that they might not fall, and was in that way their Redeemer. And if Our Lord exercised a greater power of redemption over Mary than over others, by preserving her from actual sin, He exercised His greatest power by preserving her from original sin."

As the Rev. D. I. McDermott says in his *Sermons on the Blessed Virgin:* "The one grand leading idea presented for our consideration in almost every part of the Mass and the Office of the feast of the Immaculate Conception is, that Mary was the tabernacle, temple, house, so to speak, in which the Redeemer of the world lived for nine months; and that all the graces with which Mary was enriched were given her to make her a dwelling-place worthy of the Son of God. In the prayer at Mass this morning, the Church says: O God, who didst cause that a virgin should be conceived without sin, to the end that she should be made a meet dwelling-place for Thy Son: O God, who through the precious death of Thy Son foreseen by Thee didst keep her clean from all stain, hear us, we beseech Thee, and grant that by her prayers, we also who are presently defiled may finally be made pure, and so with her attain unto Thee. In the Office of this feast, the Church applies to Mary these words: 'Wisdom has built for Himself a house.' The divine Architect, however, never fails to attain His purposes, to execute satisfactorily His designs. He that annihilated Himself in becoming man might have dispensed with many things which would, according to our worldly notions, have befitted His abode, but what one thing must He have, by very force of His nature, excluded from it?

"According to the Apostle, Our Lord became like unto us in all things except—in what? Except in sin.

"Sin, therefore, must have been excluded from this, His carefully considered house. 'The Architect,' says St. Proclus, 'was not dishonored in His work, for He dwelt in the house He Himself had built. The clay did not soil the potter in refashion-

ing the vessel he had molded. Nor did aught from the Virgin's womb defile the most pure God; for as He received no stain in forming it He received none in proceeding from it.' If holiness became the material temple wherein God dwelt in the spirit of His power, how much more, then, did it become the living temple in which He dwelt for nine months? The temple in which, according to a spiritual writer, were forged the weapons by which He overcame the devil—the 'House of Gold' enclosing the well-spring whence He drew that blood, one drop of which was capable of saving the world. Well, then, may we cry with the Psalmist: 'Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord!' Well, then, may we cry out in the words of the Office of the day: 'The Most High sanctified His temple, placed its foundations in the holy mountain, and built it in the sun.'"

"The ancient tabernacle formed by men," writes the author of *Lessons from Our Lady's Life*, "was necessarily incomplete, even as the rites and ceremonies of old were but types of the perfect Sacrifice to come; but Mary came into the world perfect from the hands of God. Mary was the holy of holies in very truth, the temple of the Most High, the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost, and through her, as the Mother of the Victim, the supreme, all-availing Sacrifice was offered to God for man. Before her very birth she was 'blessed among women,' spotless as befitted the predestined Mother of the Most High. To understand the dignity which her Immaculate Conception confers on Mary we must realize the full value of the human soul in the eyes of its Maker. The body, indeed, is formed of the dust of the earth, but the soul is the very breath of God. Made to His image and likeness, instructed by His voice, sanctified by His Holy Spirit, redeemed by the

blood of His only Son, how much is the soul worth! If an ordinary soul, subject to many frailties and marred with many blemishes, be yet so precious in the sight of God, what must be the dignity of Mary, whose soul was absolutely free not only from actual sin but also from that inherited stain common to humanity?

"The consideration of the Immaculate Conception of our holy Mother should fill us with the greatest reverence for that wondrous purity which raised her above all creation, and which she carried unsullied throughout her life. 'The Immaculate Conception,' said a holy nun lately called away, 'suggests thoughts of joy and comfort. Of joy—for as a child is proud of its mother, may we not rejoice in the beauty of Our Lady—"*Tu honorificentia populi nostri*"—who won the admiration of men, angels, and of God Himself—"*Gratia plena, tota pulchra es*"? Of comfort—for it was for mankind as well as for herself that Mary received the grace of freedom from sin, in order that she might bring forth Our Lord, through whose merits she has especial power of dispensing to us purity of conscience. . . . How dear was purity to her, since to keep it in its original splendor she would have sacrificed the greatest of honors—divine maternity.' Let us honor the immaculate purity of Mary by endeavoring to become like her. She was sinless even in her conception, that she might be worthy to bring forth the Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world, and she desires sinlessness in her children. For love of our spotless Mother, then, let us resolve to fly from all occasions of sin, to refrain from even the smallest deliberate fault, that her pure eyes may find in us naught to offend their gaze."

"Well may the enlightened Christian," exclaims

a pious author, "make a pilgrimage . . . to the Heart of Mary. If he feels with St. Paul that he has been redeemed at a great price, if he values with St. Peter more than the corruptible gold and silver of this world the blood of Christ in which he has been redeemed, well may he go and prostrate himself before the heart of Mary, and worship with humble reverence before that fountain from which the saving tide of redemption has flowed upon him."

CHAPTER LXXV.

Mater Dolorosa.—Our Blessed Mother of Sorrows.

THERE is a group of statuary called the "Pieta," which reminds us of all the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, not by representing them all, but by presenting to our view that scene in the sacrifice of Calvary wherein the dead body of the Saviour, after having been taken down from the cross, is laid in the arms of the Mother of sorrows; that moment when Mary gave to Jesus the last sad look and the last loving embrace ere His sacred body was consigned to the tomb. When we behold the dead body of Christ pressed to the bosom of the Virgin Mother, when we behold Mary's searching, agonizing glance into the sightless eyes, and into the gaping wounds of Jesus, we need not be told what had been up to this the Son's sufferings or the Mother's sorrows. Just as the last kiss on the brow of a loved one cold in death brings, in an instant, before the mind, the incidents of his last sickness, even the whole life of the dead, so one look on this group recalls all the incidents of Our Lord's suffering and of Our Lady's sorrow, with the distinctness and vividness with which a flash of lightning reveals objects in the darkness.

To-day it will be my endeavor to impart to you some idea, however faint, of Mary's sorrow, although to do so would be a difficult task for one possessed of the greatest learning, the most vivid imagination, and the most eloquent tongue. That we may learn how hard it is to form any adequate idea of Mary's sorrow, the Church applies to her the

words of the Prophet Jeremias: "To what shall I compare thee, or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I equal thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? For great as the sea is thy destruction" (Lam. ii. 13).

Who can measure the sea? While sailing across its vast expanse the largest vessel seems but an atom on its bosom. In sight is a great waste of water, which is but as a drop in comparison with those mighty wastes of water which the horizon conceals from view. At certain points, the length, breadth, and depth of the sea may be measured; at others it stretches out and sinks down so far and so irregularly as to baffle all human efforts to estimate its volume. Thus the sea, while not infinite in extent, is, humanly speaking, immeasurable.

This is why the sea is truly a picture of Mary's broken-heartedness. Now and again, definite views are obtained of certain features of Mary's sorrow, which, for the moment, seem to afford some basis for an accurate estimate of her sufferings. When, however, an attempt is made to measure them, other aspects of the intensity, duration, and bitterness of her dolors are revealed in such bewildering proportions as to render futile all efforts to measure the sea of her broken-heartedness. Thus reflection shows us that Mary's sorrow, though falling short of the infinite, is measureless.

Some notion of Mary's sorrow may be formed from the consideration of the three things personified in the "Pieta," *viz.*, her love, her pity, and her compassion.

The greatness, the intensity of love depends upon the power to love and the attractiveness of the object on which love is bestowed. The faculties of man's

soul are developed by his virtues or dwarfed by his vices, just as man's sensibility to pain is increased by healthfulness or diminished by sickness. As disease dulls, deadens the nerves in certain forms of sickness, until the power to suffer is so decreased or destroyed that the body may be cut or burned without the afflicted one experiencing any sensation of pain, so sin hardens the heart, dries up the fountains of compassion in the soul until the very power to love or sympathize with others is either lessened or altogether lost.

Sin, the Catechism says, darkens the understanding, weakens the will, and begets an inclination to evil, until vice finally renders the soul indifferent to all its obligations, dead to all the noble sentiments that should glow in it. Through wickedness, parents become heartless, insensible to all the claims of children; and spouses to the fidelity and affection which should be cherished between husband and wife. In his epistle to the Romans, St. Paul sums up in these words the consequence of the vices into which the pagans had fallen: "Foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without mercy." In his epistle to Timothy, the Apostle says of those given to a reprobate sense, that they are without natural affection. In a word, sin tends to make monsters of men.

As, then, in proportion to the ravages of disease, the body becomes insensible to pain, so, in proportion to their degradation, do sinners lose natural affection. As the greatest capacity for physical suffering exists in the sound, perfect body, so natural affections are developed and strengthened in proportion to the sanctity of the soul.

Mary was sinless, preserved by a singular privilege from both original and actual sin. Her soul re-

mained unclouded by even the shadow of any imbruting passion. She not only retained unimpaired all the natural feelings of her pure heart, but she cultivated them to the highest degree possible for a creature to attain. So eminent in sanctity did she become, that the Archangel Gabriel said to her: "Mary, thou hast found favor with God." As her holiness surpassed that of the angels of heaven, her power to love exceeded that of the cherub or seraph.

The strongest form of human love is maternal affection. "Can a woman," asks the Lord through the mouth of the Prophet Isaias, "forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, I will not forget thee." Here God speaks of a mother forgetting the child of her womb as an almost impossible contingency, and finds in a mother's love the highest type of His own undying affection for His creatures.

Mary was the Virgin Mother. Hers was the heart of the Immaculate Virgin and of the divine Mother. It is evident, therefore, that Mary by nature and by grace had, of any creature, the greatest capacity to love, to pity, and to suffer; and as she had consecrated herself entirely to God there were neither worldly interests nor human ties to divide her love, or divert it from her divine Son. It was centered wholly in Jesus.

Maternal instinct often blinds women to their children's deformity or depravity; it impels them to love, to cling to them when they have neither beauty nor goodness to excite or retain affection. Mary, however, loved Jesus because He was infinitely worthy of her love. No mother ever had such a son. Mary's Son was both human and divine, the fruit of her chaste womb, "the splendor of the Father's glory and the figure of His substance," at once the Son of

Mary and the Son of God. For three and thirty years had she seen Him develop into the comeliest of the children of men; for three and thirty years she had seen Him increase "in age and wisdom and grace before God and men," had seen not only the beauty of holiness, but the divinity itself light up His features; for three and thirty years she had admired His beauty, wondered at His wisdom, revered His virtues, adored His divinity.

Thus in Mary was concentrated, as in one consuming flame, the strongest affection a mother ever cherished for a child, and the intensest love a creature ever bore the Creator. And, since it was impossible for greater love to exist than that which united Jesus and Mary, there could be no greater sympathy than that which existed between them. Every suffering inflicted on the sacred humanity of Jesus was a sword that pierced Mary's soul.

While the love of Jesus has been the sole support and consolation of the martyrs in their suffering, it was the cause of the exceeding bitterness of Mary's sorrow. St. Augustine says of St. Lawrence: "Intoxicated with the wine of divine love, he felt neither torments nor death." Father Faber says: "The great support of the martyrs is that their inward eye is bent on Jesus. It is because that within is stronger than that without, that they are joyful amid their torments. It is not that their agonies are not real, but that they are tempered, counteracted by the succors which the soul supplies, from the grace and love with which their generous Master is at the moment filling them to overflowing."

On the other hand, Jesus was the sole cause of His Mother's grief. Therefore, St. Liguori, quoting Diez, says: "While the other martyrs are represented as bearing the instruments of their suffering

and death, St. Paul with the sword, St. Andrew with the cross, St. Lawrence with the gridiron, Mary is represented (in the 'Pieta') as supporting her dead Son, because Jesus Himself was the instrument of her martyrdom."

Of Mary, Father Faber says: "Her sinless body was delicately framed for suffering beyond all others, except that of her Son. The more refined and delicate the soul, the more excruciating its agony."

Pity is the feeling by which we are moved to relieve another's distress. It often lingers in the breast after the other sentiments of humanity have been extinguished. It is so general that it may be said that one touch of pain makes the whole world kin. It may be exercised when there is neither love nor esteem felt for the sufferer.

> "Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
> Pity gave ere charity began,"

says the poet. It not seldom degenerates into a morbid sentimentality because extended to criminals in such a way as to lessen the horror of crime. It is found in its true character and strongest aspect when the sufferer is punished for adhering to a righteous cause, and where the heart of the sympathizer is filled with love and justice and mercy. If then there ever was a heart that could pity, it was Mary's; if ever there was an object that called forth pity, it was Jesus. The exquisite perfections of His body and the noble sentiments of His soul rendered Him most sensitive to insult and to pain; His torments were the most excruciating ever endured; He had not a single consolation. He suffered unjustly; He endured all tortures uncomplainingly; He suffered unselfishly, dying that sinners might live.

Mary knew all this. She knew how every insult

and blasphemy sickened His soul; how every wound made His flesh quiver with pain. She knew that He had labored only for the salvation of men; and therefore, she knew how His soul shrank in horror from the false accusations brought against Him; how ingratitude, sharper than the serpent's tooth, had stung Him to the quick.

How her heart must have been touched, melted with pity, when she saw Him in the hands of His enemies, bearing the cross and crowned with thorns, surrounded by an infuriated rabble demanding His death! How her sympathetic soul must have gone out to Him as she accompanied Him to the place of crucifixion, as she saw Him nailed to the cross, as she witnessed Him hanging on the tree, as she saw Him die, as she embraced His lifeless body before it was laid in the grave!

What a relief would it have been to Mary, what a comfort would it have been to Jesus, if she had been permitted to vindicate His innocence against those who charged Him with crimes against God and His nation! What a relief to bid them be still who reviled and blasphemed Him, to wipe away the blood and spittle which disfigured His adorable face, to stay the arms that dealt Him blows, to lift Him up tenderly when He fell under the weight of the cross, to moisten His parched lips when He cried out: "I thirst!" To speak a comforting word as He exclaimed in His dereliction: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" To hear a sigh from His lips or to see a spark of life in His eye as she folded His bruised and bleeding body to her bosom for the last time!

When the one who pities can afford relief, his thoughts are diverted from his own feelings and centered on the good that he is doing the sufferer.

The agony of agonies is felt when a mother's heart is melted with pity as she witnesses the sufferings of a well-beloved son, and finds herself powerless to ease his pain. Mary's sorrow was embittered by the fact that neither her love nor her pity availed to prevent or assuage the sufferings of her Son. While her love forced her to press near to Jesus, her pity was as unavailing to mitigate His sufferings during His Passion as it was to resuscitate Him when, lifeless, He was laid upon her knee. Thus her presence during the Passion but added to the anguish of Jesus, while it deluged her own soul with an ocean of bitter regret.

Why? Because her compassion would not permit any mitigation of Jesus' suffering. The words "pity" and "compassion" are usually taken to signify the same thing, are used interchangeably; and when a difference is recognized between them it is one of degree rather than of kind, compassion being understood as implying more of tenderness than pity. The difference, however, between these words, as they are exemplified in the "Pieta," is radical, arising from the unique position of the Blessed Virgin in the plan of Redemption, from her exceptional relation to the Passion of Christ.

The primitive, literal meaning of compassion is to suffer with another. In this sense, the apostles and disciples of Our Lord were His fellow sufferers as well as Mary, though not to the same degree. The very following of their Master required them to leave all things, to deny themselves, and to drink of the chalice of which He would drink; but the apostles were without any clear, well-defined idea of what Jesus would have to suffer before entering into His glory. Mary, however, was not an unconscious instrument in the work of Redemption up to the mo-

ment Christ's Passion began, and then its unwilling witness.

She was not only (like the other friends of the Saviour, but more fully) a sorrowful witness of the scenes which preceded and accompanied the awful tragedy of Calvary; she not only fully realized all that Jesus suffered, but she foresaw before He was conceived in her womb all that He would suffer. So much at heart, indeed, had she the object of His sufferings, that she was constrained out of love for sinners and obedience to God to devote Him to those sufferings, while all the affection of her soul inclined her to save Him from them.

The only thing in history that approaches Mary's compassion was the suffering of Abraham when, at God's command, he consented to sacrifice his son, Isaac. But what did Abraham's contemplated sacrifice of Isaac cost him in comparison with what the sacrifice of Jesus cost Mary? What proportion does a father's love bear to a mother's? What comparison is there between Isaac and Jesus? Only that of the shadow to the substance, only that of the type to the reality. In consenting to the awful sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary, Mary simply immolated herself by doing a holy violence to the strongest and tenderest ties, to feelings that could exist only between the Virgin Mother and the God-Man, Jesus Christ. Abraham consented to the sacrifice of Isaac during a few hours, but Mary daily, momentarily consented to it for thirty-three years. Abraham's soul was filled for a brief space with bitter sorrow, but Mary's during the whole lifetime of Jesus.

In order to see how immeasurably Mary's sufferings surpassed those which any other human being ever endured, it is necessary to acquire some idea of her foreknowledge of Christ's Passion, of her will-

ingness to participate in it, of the heroic, holy purpose that animated her when she devoted Jesus to death in the cause of men's salvation.

Mary's sanctity entitled her to the fullest confidence of the Deity as to the means by which the world's Redemption was to be accomplished. While God conceals His counsels from the proud and wicked, He confides them to the humble and to the innocent. Mary was selected because of her humility. She was full of grace; she had found favor with God. Upon no creature has such a eulogy been passed as that which God the Father, by the mouth of the Archangel Gabriel, pronounced upon Mary. No creature was ever admitted to that close and marvelous union that existed between Mary and the Eternal Father. Living only for God, and in God, it may well be believed that secrets were committed to her of which priest and prophet were kept in ignorance; just as Jesus communicated to John, by reason of his virginal sanctity, secrets concerning which the other apostles dare not even question their Master. It may well be believed that Mary knew more than the prophets of old, upon whose vivid portrayals of the sufferings of the Messias she had often meditated; that she knew more than Joseph, who learned from the angel that Jesus would "save His people from their sins" (and every Israelite knew that without the effusion of blood there was no remission of sin); that she knew more than Simeon, whose vision of the Passion enabled him, in those forcible, expressive words, to liken Mary's sympathy with Jesus in His sufferings to a sword of sorrow that would pierce her soul.

While the apostles were often, during the lifetime of their Master, rebuked for their slowness to believe, their failure to understand, never once was

Mary's faith or understanding rebuked. On the contrary, she is represented as keeping the divine counsels, pondering them in her heart. While the apostles, when they spoke of Christ, before the descent of the Holy Ghost, often exhibited the densest ignorance of His true character, and the most erroneous notions of His purpose in coming into the world; while even after the Resurrection they asked: "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" Mary, on the other hand, showed in the *Magnificat*, and at Cana, the fullest appreciation of His divine character, and of His coming. No Doctor of the Church, with all the advantages which the complete history of Christ afforded him, has been able to formulate more correct ideas of Jesus than those clearly implied in the words Mary spoke concerning Him.

The extent of Mary's knowledge is not a mere matter of speculation. It is a matter of fact that, before the Incarnation, she was the only daughter of Israel that entertained a correct notion of the character of the Messias. The other women of Judea regarded the coming Messias as a great temporal prince. Hence, as the time of His coming approached, a consuming desire to be the mother of the Messias burned in the breast of every Jewish woman. With this object in view, the maid sought marriage, the wife prayed for fruitfulness, and implored the Lord to save her from sterility as from a curse. No such ambition, however, was cherished by Mary. On the contrary, by a vow of virginity, she had made her mothership of the Messias, humanly speaking, impossible. She had such a true conception of that exalted dignity that she deemed perpetual continence and a life of sanctification in the temple necessary to prepare herself, not for the

mothership of the Messias, but to become the handmaid, the servant of the woman God would deem worthy of so high an honor. In this, what testimony does not Mary bear to that incomparable dignity to which God, regarding her humility, exalted her! No less an authority than Cardinal Newman interprets Mary's reply to the angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," as signifying that Mary simply aspired to become the servant of the mother of the Messias.

If Mary entertained such correct ideas of the Messias before the angel's visit, what fulness of knowledge must she not have received through Gabriel's message and his answers to her questions! Her dialogue with the Archangel shows plainly that she was not selected as a mere instrument, but as a free, intelligent agent; that she was free to refuse to become the Mother of the Messias, and that she consented only after having attained to a clear understanding of what would be required of her.

"She was troubled," the Gospel says, at the angel's words, and asked in her own mind the meaning of his salutation. The angel having allayed her fears, Mary asks plainly: "How shall this be done, for I know not man?" Mary did not blindly consent, like the apostles, to participate in the work of the Messias, and like them fail in her part when it came to drink of the cup of Christ's bitterness. She consented only after she had known what sacrifice that consent would demand of her, and therefore, she never afterwards shrank from what was laid upon her: "Be it done unto me according to thy word."

It is clear that Mary could have absolutely refused to become the Mother of the Messias; nevertheless, her acceptance was so deliberate, was given with such full knowledge of the sufferings it involved, and with such willing obedience to the counsels of

God; and consequently, was so meritorious, that the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Elizabeth, declared Mary blessed for having consented: "Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord" (Luke i. 45).

If, at the time of the Annunciation, Mary did not know the sorrows she would have to endure in consequence of her consent, why should she be called blessed for having believed? Why, as the Gospel says, was she troubled? Why should she not have gladly and promptly accepted the honor, so much coveted by the other women of her day? Why should she not have been profoundly grateful for the honor if the sword or sorrow it contained was concealed from her? Mary was blessed in her belief, singularly and especially blessed, because she made the voluntary sacrifice of her maternal affections in offering her Son as a Victim of propitiation for the sins of the world. Mary was superlatively blessed among all the friends of God; she was also troubled in this, that she consented to become a mother in order that her Son might suffer a cruel death to redeem the world. In this consisted Mary's cooperation in the work of Redemption. She knowingly, willingly, in obedience to the Eternal Father, consented to supply from the fountain of her life-blood the Victim, the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world.

Let those who would form some idea of her compassion look at Mary, from the moment of the Incarnation, standing in spirit as truly under the shadow of the cross as when she actually stood by the cross of Jesus on Mount Calvary. During that more than thirty years of martyrdom, her knowledge of Jesus' sufferings did not increase, but her realiza-

tion of them became more and more vivid and painful in proportion as she saw Jesus increase in age, in wisdom, and in grace, until she saw Him offered a bleeding, dying Victim on the tree. Every time she saw Jesus, every time she heard Him, every time she thought of Him, she was compelled in spirit to offer Him as a propitiation for the sins of the world.

"Every look of Jesus," says Father Faber, "drove the sword deeper into Mary's soul. Every sound of His voice, while it lifted her on the wings of maternal transport, brought with it its own bitterness, which pierced all the keener and deeper for the joy that had gone with it. Every action of His came with a multitude of pains, in which past and present blended in one terrible prevision, which was ever present to her blessed soul. The very sight of Jesus was her torture; Jesus, the joy of the martyrs, was the executioner of His Mother."

Mary's sorrows are, in one respect, like the attributes of God. Theologians tell us that in God there is no distinction between love and anger, between justice and mercy; that these are only forms of His infinite goodness which to men seem at one time love, at another anger; at one time, justice, at another, mercy; just as the sun, though fixed in the heavens and at all times giving forth the same light and heat, seems to occupy different positions at morning, noon, and evening, to be hotter in summer than in winter. So the sorrows of Mary seem distinct in character, time, and effects, because of the different circumstances under which they have been manifested to us; whereas, in Mary, they constitute but one and the same sea of bitter woe.

Men may contemplate each incident in Christ's life as separate and distinct in itself from other incidents. They may meditate on the Joyful or Glori-

ous Mysteries without for a moment considering the Sorrowful Mysteries. They may even sympathize with Christ in His cruelest tortures, and thereby fill their souls with peace (through the compunction thus excited for their sins); fill them with hope of salvation, as well as admiration for the infinite love of Jesus for sinners.

This method of meditation has led men to regard each mystery of the Passion as distinct and disconnected from the other mysteries. Many have thus erroneously fancied that Mary's attention, like theirs, was fixed only on one event or mystery of the Passion at a time; that each suffering of Christ involved her in a grief peculiarly its own, and bore no relation to that of the mystery that either preceded or followed it.

How different was it with Mary! To her Christ's whole life was more than an open book. She saw it all uninterruptedly from Nazareth to Calvary, from the manger to the tomb. For her there were no Joyful Mysteries, followed for a brief period by the Sorrowful. No; from the words spoken by the angel of the Annunciation to the words spoken by the angel of the Resurrection, all were for her Sorrowful Mysteries.

Mary always saw the end. "The sword of Simeon's prophecy was the crucifixion. Everything in the life of Jesus reminded her of the death He was to die, and therefore required her to consent to the sacrifice of her Son anew." Father Faber says: "Postures and attitudes in which she saw her beloved Son had some startling likeness in them to something which was to occur in the Passion. When a carpenter's tool pressed against the palm of His hand, she saw the wound of the nail there. The white brow of boyhood often seemed as if it had a

coronal of rosy spots around where the thorns should be."

There is a painting which has suggested this sermon, and that may be called "The Shadow of the Cross." It represents a scene in the workshop of Nazareth. Joseph is employed at the carpenter's bench, Mary sits plying the distaff. A bright summer's day pours a flood of light into the room. Jesus, a beautiful youth, with filial piety informing every feature, advances with outstretched arms towards His Mother to embrace her, and to imprint a kiss upon her cheek. O! what would this scene have been to Mary, with what joy would it have dilated her soul, if only the future had been concealed from her! But, alas! looking at Jesus, the Mother's joy is turned into grief, because she sees that the loving attitude of her Son casts the shadow of the cross on the opposite wall.

What more touching, entrancing, than the scene enacted at Bethlehem! The winter winds were joyful with the music of the multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and singing "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will;" the dismal cave was lighted up with the glory of heaven; angels, and wondering, adoring shepherds came to worship the new-born Saviour; and Mary and Joseph lovingly, adoringly, contemplated the heavenly Babe. Had that scene, which has filled the earth for centuries with light and gladness, no joy for Mary? Did not its splendor, for the time being, dispel the shadow of the cross? Did not Mary, in the words of Holy Scripture, rejoice "Because a man was born into the world," and, for the moment, turn the eye of her soul from the vision of Calvary?

Alas! no. The joyous light of the Nativity only projected the shadow of the cross more distinctly

upon Bethlehem. The scene in the stable, it is true, touched Mary's soul, caused rivers of love to well out of her heart, but only that the thought of Calvary might instantly change them into an ocean of bitterness. As Mary laid the divine Infant in the manger, as she saw His little arms stretched out as if to embrace her, she thought of the time that same Jesus would be laid upon the cross, and nailed to it, when His arms would be stretched out in cruelest torture, in infinite love, to embrace the whole human race. As she listened to the song of the angels, she thought of the blasphemies with which men would demand His death; as she looked on the reverent shepherds, she thought of the wild beasts that would cry for His blood; as she looked on the glory of heaven lighting the first opening of His eyes, she thought of the darkness that would fall upon their closing. As she saw earth and heaven rejoicing over His birth, she thought of how man and God would forsake Him at death; as she clasped Him to her bosom, she thought of the time when He would be laid at last, as you see Him in this group of statuary, all bleeding and bruised, wounded and lifeless, on her breast. Thus, even at Bethlehem, Mary stood in the shadow of the cross; and there, amid all the joy of that scene, was compelled to consecrate the winsome Infant to the death of Calvary.

"The Passion," says Father Faber, "became an inevitable vision to her. She could not look away. Everything about it was commuted into bitterness. The process went on when the sun was shining brightest, and the Mother's heart expanded to its light and heat. She belonged to sorrow. It had drawn her life under its dark waters. Her life was hidden in the Heart of Jesus, amid gloomy forms, appalling shadows, dread insights into horrible gulfs

of sin, thunders and lightnings of divine wrath, frenzies of lawless demons, excesses of human cruelty, and a very living show of the instruments of the Passion. Every action of Jesus became a suffering, every source of joy a fountain of bitterness, every look at Jesus, every movement that He made, every word that He uttered, all stirred and diffused the bitterness that was in her. The very lapse of time itself was bitterness, for she saw Gethsemane and Calvary coming down the stream toward her."

And if this was Mary's cruel portion during the Joyful Mysteries, who can imagine what must have been the bitterness of her grief during those cruel scenes that followed, where every torture of Jesus, like a sword, actually pierced her soul!

It was during the Sorrowful Mysteries that the shadow of the cross constantly deepened, that the sufferings of Mary grew more intense, until the shadow became the dread reality; until Mary actually stood by the cross to which Jesus was nailed; until the sight of the Son's sufferings immolated the Mother a living victim on the altar of the world's salvation.

Hitherto the stripes, thorns, nails, lance, had been invisible, had had their existence only in the mind. Now they are awful realities that afflict body and soul. "Sense," says Father Faber, "is more than prevision, something far different from it. The senses interrupt that interior tranquillity in which the darkest visions may possess the soul without disturbing it. The senses have special things of their own in sights, sounds, and touches of grief; they pierce the flesh, causing it to tremble with chilly pains, torturing the nerves, freezing and firing the blood by turns, stabbing the brain like daggers, and bruising the convulsed heart as if it were with a vise of iron.

It was the eye-witnessing of the Passion which made Mary's martyrdom to be in her body as well as in her soul, because it made every pulse a beating instrument of pain. What a fearful thing for a mother, particularly one of such exquisite sensibilities and profound love as Mary, to have to follow her only Child through every step of that bloody drama!" She could pity Him, could wish to save Him; but, like Him, she yielded to the eternal decree, saying: "Not my will, but Thine be done!"

Considering the intensity, bitterness, and duration of her sufferings in soul and body, the question arises: Could mortal have made greater sacrifices, or have suffered more in behalf of any cause, than Mary made and suffered by consenting to give her Son for the salvation of men? What did patriarch, or prophet, or apostle do for the salvation of men in comparison with what Mary suffered for it? If those who, at Christ's invitation, abandoned their nets and boats to follow Him, shall hereafter sit on thrones and judge the world, what must be Mary's place in the kingdom of God, since she, in obedience to the divine will (to appropriate the words of St. Paul), "spared not her own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"?

Let the redeemed learn, then, what they owe to Mary. Let them think of her more than thirty years' martyrdom, in consequence of her maternal instincts leading her to desire that the chalice of suffering might pass from her divine Son, while her obedience to the divine counsels and her devotion to man's salvation, doing a holy violence to her love, forced her to say: "Let the will of the Father be done; let my Son suffer death to redeem His people from their sins!"

Let them look often and thoughtfully upon the

scene on Mount Calvary! Let them meditate on Mary's holy heroism. Let them think of her as a woman weak in her sex, as a mother wounded in her tenderest affections; as sorrowful unto death, yet tearless; unwavering in her purpose to fulfill the promise made to God through Gabriel; willing to drain the chalice of her affliction; calm, when it came to making the sacrifice required for the redemption of the world; resolved to witness the end, to see Jesus blot out the handwriting against sinners with the most precious blood He had drawn from the fountains of her heart; to stand by the cross until she heard: "*Consummatum est,*" "It is finished;" until she saw her Son become the Saviour of the world, and the children of wrath become the children of God; until Jesus' lifeless body enfolded to her breast left her, amid the shadows of Calvary, in a desolation so unutterable that earth has no name for its anguish.

Let Christians look upon Mary crowned by Jesus on Calvary, in the words of Isaias, "with the crown of tribulation," and then they will understand why Mary takes an interest in their spiritual welfare; why she jealously guards the affair of their salvation in life; why she bends all her energies at the hour of death to protect souls from the assault of the demon. Then they will understand why that unfailing devotion to the cause of the world's Redemption which Mary displayed from Nazareth to Calvary she now exhibits in behalf of each and every one of the redeemed: to the end that the precious blood of Jesus shall not have been shed for any soul in vain.

The object of the "Pieta," then, is to promote devotion to the Passion of Christ, and to the sorrow of His blessed Mother. Happily for you who will

pray before it, the love excited at it will not, like Mary's love for Jesus, fill your souls with sadness, but rather fill them with "that peace which surpasseth all understanding," because at this shrine you will conceive a lasting hatred of sin, the sole cause of Jesus' suffering and Mary's sorrow.

The pity born of the contemplation of this group will not be, like Mary's, powerless to mitigate or to prevent the injuries inflicted on the Saviour, but rather it will enable you to relieve Him in the person of all earth's afflicted—to give drink to the thirsty, food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, instruction to the ignorant—of whom Christ says: "As often as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it unto Me." It will enable you to prevent those sins which found expression in the injuries inflicted during the Passion on Christ, and by which, St. Paul says, men now "crucify the Son of God anew and make a mockery of Him."

The desire to suffer with and for Christ with which the "Pieta" will fire your souls will not, like Mary's compassion, add to the anguish of your suffering Lord by making Him the witness of His followers' pain, but rather will make Jesus and Mary and the angels of heaven rejoice over the innocence preserved, the conversions wrought, the temptations overcome, the virtues cultivated, the souls saved through your zeal and labors and sufferings in furthering the kingdom of God on earth.*

*A sermon by the Very Rev. D. I. McDermott, D.D., rector of St. Mary's, Philadelphia. (The introductory sentence has been slightly changed.)

CHAPTER LXXVI.

Our Lady's Day.

Saturday Dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

I SHALL not pause to treat in detail of the numbers of Religious Congregations, sodalities, confraternities, etc., that have been instituted in modern times, and more especially since the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception. Nor shall I refer to the very large number of devotions that have been introduced into the Church, and approved and indulgenced by its Supreme Pontiff. And as regards churches and religious and educational institutions of every kind, the whole world, even to its remotest parts, is dotted with them, from the stately cathedral to the humble country church —and nowhere more so than in America. But it will be both interesting and instructive to dwell briefly on the manner in which Saturday came to be dedicated to the holy Mother of God; and later to the Immaculate Conception.

It would be impossible to determine with certainty when Saturday first became especially Mary's day; but it is worthy of remark that it was first sacred to the *sorrows* of the Blessed Virgin, because on that day she was filled with bitterest anguish of soul on account of her divine Son being then cold in death in the holy sepulcher. For this reason Pope Innocent I., about the year 417, decreed that Saturday should be observed as a day of abstinence in honor of Mary's sorrows; but in doing so he doubtless only gave the sanction of his supreme authority

to what had existed, at least in places, long before. Some writers have found an argument in favor of the dedication of Saturday to the Blessed Virgin as early as the eighth century, from the fact that the votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin is assigned by Alcuin to that day. But on referring to the original documents, it is found, as Father Bridgett remarks, that this argument is not conclusive; for Alcuin merely says that "we have added a Mass of the holy Mother of God for certain days, which, if any one sees fit, he may sing." But it is beyond question that as early as the eleventh century Saturday was considered as peculiarly dedicated to the Mother of God. "A beautiful custom," says St. Peter Damian, "has grown up in some churches, that on every Saturday in Mary's honor Mass is celebrated, unless some feast or ferial in Lent prevent it." St. Peter greatly promoted this devotion as well as the recitation of the Little Office, and the fast of Saturday. Pope Urban II., in the Council of Clermont in 1096, made the Office of the Blessed Virgin on Saturday of obligation. The same Pope introduced the Preface of the Blessed Virgin into the missal.

A Scotch writer of the fourteenth century, either Fordun, or his continuator Bower, says: "In the days of our fathers the Sabbath (Saturday) was held in great veneration, in honor of the Blessed Virgin, principally by the devotion of women, who every Saturday, with great piety, restricted themselves to one meal, and that merely of bread and water." He tells how the Sovereign Pontiff set apart the whole Office of Saturday to Our Lady; and he continues: "Therefore the faithful on this day, inflamed with zeal for Mary, to please her Son, keep a solemn Office to His most glorious Mother. They sing also her solemn Mass with the

Gloria in excelsis. Let each of us, therefore, see whether he has the affection of a good son toward this Mother, rejoicing more in her honor than in his own, and feeling her dishonor more than his own shame. But if a sinner can thus love Mary, how much more does her innocent Son Jesus, the God of charity! In this confidence many churches, as they can not set apart all the days to her, have chosen at least one day in each week." He then complains that the old customs are no longer strictly observed. "Prelates," he says, "are very culpable in allowing the people to vary the days of fasting in honor of Mary, since Saturday is dedicated to her. But now you will find both men and women take good suppers, even eating eggs on Saturday, who on Tuesday or Thursday would not touch a crust of bread, lest they should break Our Lady's fast. . . . O self-will, enemy of the soul, opposed to God and pleasing to the devil!" It may be remarked, however, that the English, who were noted before the Reformation for their devotion to the Blessed Virgin, centered it principally in her joys (Father Bridgett). St. Louis, king of France, made it a constant practice to wash the feet of several poor persons every Saturday in Mary's honor; and afterward wait on them at table. He also made provision for Masses to be celebrated on every Saturday in the year in the church of Our Lady of Chartres, and desired, as far as the rubrics would permit, that they should be votive Masses of the Blessed Virgin. What was true of the countries mentioned was true almost universally of every country of Europe and the East in the ages of faith.

As time wore on, and by a secret dispensation of Providence the devotion of Catholics to the Blessed Virgin began to center more and more on the Im-

maculate Conception, it soon came to usurp the place of the others that had been fixed on Saturday; so that, in the last two or three centuries, if not before that time, the last day of the week has come to be by excellence the day of the Immaculate Conception. Throughout the United States and many other countries the Office and Mass of the Immaculate Conception are of obligation on Saturday, when the feast of a saint or a privileged ferial or octave day does not fall upon it. This arrangement is destined doubtless to continue, and even to spread, as devotion to the Immaculate Conception is now fast becoming the leading devotion of Catholics, at least in English-speaking countries and in the New World.*

*From Father Lambing's *The Immaculate Conception.* (The Blessed Virgin, under the title of the *Immaculate Conception,* was chosen as the Patroness of the United States in 1846. The solemn definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Piux IX. occurred on Dec. 8, 1854.)

CHAPTER LXXVII.

The Blessed Sacrament and St. Joseph.

We wish to make you understand three things: the first, that, in a certain sense, we owe to St. Joseph the Wheat of the elect, which is offered to us; the second, that, participating therein, our happiness equals, yea, even surpasses, in some degree, that of St. Joseph himself; thirdly, and lastly, that his example teaches us how we ought to prepare to receive it well and to profit by it.

The glorious Patriarch, St. Joseph, was no stranger to the Eucharistic mystery. We possess in our tabernacles, we offer on our altars, we receive at the holy table, the body born of the Virgin Mary, as the Church sings: *"Ave verum Corpus, natum de Maria Virgine."* This sacred body was conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost, it is true; but it was formed in the chaste womb, and from the very substance of a tender virgin who could not dispose of herself, since she had made choice of a spouse; and by that title St. Joseph already had over the Infant Jesus a certain right.

Let us hear how the blessed Bishop of Geneva speaks upon this point: "If a dove," says he, "carries in its beak a date, and lets it fall in a garden where it takes root, to whom will the tree belong that will spring from it, but to the owner of the garden? The owner of the ground is naturally the owner of the fruit it produces: *'Res fructificat domino.'*

"Now, the Holy Spirit, the sweet Dove of the Jordan, let fall this immortal Date of the uncreated

Word into the bosom of Mary, who is compared by Him to a garden enclosed, *'hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus.'* And there the Just *'par excellence'* took root, there developed, there increased like a beautiful palm-tree, *'justus ut palma florebit.'*

"But the *Blessed Virgin belonged to St. Joseph* as the spouse belongs to her spouse; the blessed Fruit of her womb, therefore, belonged also to him, because *'quod nascitur in agro meo, meum est,'* say the jurists. It was the same with his foster-son. He was a golden ear of corn come into his field, a bunch of purple grapes produced from the branches of a vine belonging to him; to him, then, belonged also the Wheat of the elect and the Wine that germinates virgins."

Still more, St. Joseph was the guardian of the Son of God. He watched over his ward with care, and he shielded Him from persecution at the peril of his own life. Scarcely was Jesus born than cruel Herod sought to put Him to death. The murderous scythe of the jealous tyrant was raised to cut down in the blade the mysterious Wheat that germinated in the womb of Mary as in a virgin soil. Arise, Joseph, take the Child and His Mother, and provide for His safety by flight. Watch over Him, preserve Him from harm, for He is our only hope. He will one day feed the whole world with His own substance. It was Joseph who saved from being cut down by the storm of persecution that growing ear of wheat, which gave us the sacred Bread that nourishes to eternal life.

It was in Egypt that, during the seven years of plenty, the ancient Joseph stored up in granaries the wheat which was to feed the subjects of Pharao and the house of Jacob during the seven years' famine.

It was first in Egypt and then at Nazareth that the new Joseph concealed for a long time Him who, on the eve of His death, opened His tabernacles and said to both Jew and Gentile: "Take and eat, this is My body; take and drink, this is My blood. My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed."

Our Joseph, with more right than the viceroy of the Nile, may be called the provider of the world; and in these days of sterility, after nineteen centuries, we are still living on the wheat laid up and kept in reserve in those abundant granaries which we call the holy tabernacles.

Is there anything else to be said on this first point? Yes, my brethren. If St. Joseph had no part in the formation of the sacred body of Jesus, it was not so with regard to its increase and development. If he gave it not being, he supported it at his own expense. He was, says St. Bernard, *"carnis suæ nutritium,"* His foster-father; and he gained by assiduous labor life for Him by whom all things live and have their being. It was his sweat, it was, alas! very often his tears, that nourished the Infant of Nazareth in such a way that, with Santeuil, we can say of the adorable humanity of the Saviour: *"Et formata Dei sine te, de tuis crescunt membra laboribus."*

We can understand, also, that our great saint is meant to play a part in the sacred mystery which the Church presents to us. It was the bread gained by him that formed, or, at least, increased, the blood shed on Calvary, and which we receive at the altar. It is this bread become the flesh of the Son of man that gives us life.

The sacred Host comes to us sweetened with the thought of the guardianship which St. Joseph exercised over it; and with the divine blood the chalice

brings us sacred memories of the sufferings and trials of the carpenter of Nazareth.

Is not this the sense and even the expression of this passage of the decree that we now quote?* Does it not say: "*Solertissime enutrivit quem populus fidelis uti panem de cœlo descensum sumeret ad vitam æternam consequendam*"? "He nourished with greatest solicitude Him whom the faithful were one day to receive as the Bread of life, which was to sustain them on their heavenward journey."

Divine Master, do we not remember that in Thy Eucharist, which is the merciful continuation of Thy incarnation, Thou art still the Son of Mary and Joseph, and that Thou hast for Thy father and Thy mother a Heart most devoted, most filial, and most loving?

If St. Joseph refused Thee nothing, and wept that, having given all he had, he could give no more, what canst Thou refuse him, oh, Jesus, since now all is Thine, and it is Thine to give in return?

*The Decree of Pius IX., declaring St. Joseph patron of the universal Church, and raising his feast to the first class.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

On Devotion to St. Joseph, the Spouse of the Most Blessed Virgin.

It is giving to the Blessed Virgin a testimony of love which is dear and precious to her when we take her holy husband Joseph as the primary object of our devotion after that which attaches and consecrates us to her service.

In what esteem ought we not to hold such a saint, a man chosen by God to be the guardian of the infancy of His Word made flesh; to be the witness and the protector of the virginity of His Mother!

He watched over the true tabernacle of Israel; he transported from one place to another, according to seasons and circumstances, the ark of the new alliance; he held in his keeping the price of the salvation and the redemption of men. What glory to have had in this life a legitimate authority over the Queen of heaven and earth, even over "the King of ages, alone immortal, to whom belongs all glory!" In order to form an idea of his eminent merit, we have only to remember that he is the husband of Mary: the virtues of the one enable us to appreciate the virtues of the other. God gave to Mary a husband worthy of her. But, above all, remember that Jesus reposed a thousand times upon his breast. What holy, celestial feelings must not the Child-God have imparted to his heart! Joseph lived with Him who is the source of all graces, and with her who is, as it were, the channel for distributing them: how many spiritual riches did he not receive from them!

Patience, gentleness, love of our neighbor, love of God, all kinds of virtues shone in him, and were carried to the most sublime heights.

Christian soul, that desirest to give thyself up to the exercises of a devout and interior life, have recourse, in order to obtain the grace of them, to the intercession of a saint who practiced them in so perfect a manner. The Church has erected to God temples in his honor; she has instituted feasts in his honor; she invites her children, by means of devotions which she has authorized, to look upon him as one of the most powerful protectors they have in heaven.

The name of Joseph is, in fact, specially invoked by all the faithful; they frequently unite it with the name of the sacred persons to whom he was so closely united—Jesus and Mary. Well known is the indulgenced prayer, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul." If, at the time when Jesus and Mary lived at Nazareth, we had wished to obtain a grace, what more powerful mediator among men could we have employed than St. Joseph? Will he now have less credit with them?

"Go, then, to Joseph!" (Gen. xli. 55). Go to St. Joseph, that he may intercede for you. Whatever may be the grace you desire, God will grant his request. More than this, in whatever condition you may be, whatever may be your state of life, that very state and condition will provide you with a special motive of confidence in him. The rich ought to remember, while praying to him, that he is the descendant of patriarchs and of kings.

Let the poor remember that he did not disdain their obscurity; that, like them, he lived in poverty, that he labored all his life as an artisan.

The virgins, that he kept the most perfect virgin-

ity; and married persons, that he was the head of the most august family that ever existed.

Children, that he was the foster-father of Jesus, the guardian of His childhood.

Priests, that he had so often the happiness of carrying Jesus in his arms, that he even offered to the Eternal Father the first-fruits of the blood of Jesus on the day of His circumcision.

Religious, that he sanctified his solitude at Nazareth by avoiding all unnecessary contact with the world, by the most intimate union with Jesus and Mary and by the faithful discharge of every duty.

Lastly, pious and fervent souls, that never was there a heart, after the heart of Mary, that loved Jesus with greater ardor and tenderness.

But, above all, go to Joseph to obtain the grace of a good death. The common opinion that he died in the arms of Jesus and Mary has given cause for the great confidence which the faithful have, that, through his intercession, they will enjoy as happy and as consoling an end. It may, in fact, be remarked that it is particularly at the hour of death that we reap the fruits of the devotion we had during life to this great saint.*

Father Lings writes in his *Little Manual of St. Joseph:* "To the world, puffed up with pride in her science and culture, she gives as model, Joseph, whose faith is simple and childlike; who believed, without one thought or doubt, the most profound mysteries of our religion; the first after Mary to adore his God and Saviour; the first witness of His weakness as a little child, whose whole heart was filled with a deep love and reverence for his Creator.

"To the world, accustomed to judge by appearances, the Church offers as a treasure of sanctity

*From *The Imitation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.*

and virtue this humble man, who worked in the greatest retirement, thinking only of pleasing his God. Simple, obedient, chaste, and laborious, he is called a just man in the Gospel, and the Church, wishing to show how highly she values his virtues, proclaims him the guardian of her interests, and does all she can to inspire her children with a truly heart-felt devotion to this holy patriarch.

"The manner in which the Church has exalted the name of Joseph shows how very dear the devotion to this great saint is to her, and how many are the advantages and graces to be reaped from it by us, her children. If we love the Church Joseph will find an especial place in our affections, he will be the model of our lives, our help in difficulties, and our comfort in sorrow. We may never be afraid of paying too much honor and respect to him whom Jesus obeyed as a child obeys his father.

"A great many Bishops, with the Holy Father at their head, have proclaimed in a most solemn manner their approbation of the devotion to St. Joseph, and how excellent it is to place ourselves under his special protection, in this age of pride, sensuality, and cupidity.

"Pope Pius IX. was but a short time raised to the throne of St. Peter, when he ordained that throughout the whole Catholic world the feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph should be celebrated on the third Sunday after Easter, so that those who were prevented, by their occupations, from honoring our holy patron on March 19th, which is the principal feast dedicated to his name, might be able to invoke his assistance and study his virtues on this day consecrated to the worship of God.

"Let us contemplate St. Joseph in his hidden life at Nazareth, and resolve to become more and more

devout toward him. Seeing him so holy, we will understand how right it is that we should try to follow his footsteps and imitate his virtues. When we see him so great we will feel moved to implore his powerful intercession with Almighty God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will come down upon us, and the testimony of a good conscience will illuminate our souls with rays of holy joy."

An indulgence of three hundred days is attached to the following invocation:

> "Help us, Joseph, in our earthly strife,
> E'er to lead a pure and blameless life."

The most holy and enlightened Catholic writers have testified to the advantages of devotion to St. Joseph. We might cite such glorious clients of the humble patriarch as St. Bernard, St. Teresa, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Francis de Sales, Gerson, Suarez, and many others. But we will confine ourselves to a few short extracts from writers of our own time.

Father Dalgairns, of the London Oratory of St. Philip Neri, writes thus in his book on the *Devotion to the Heart of Jesus:*

"It can not be denied that in the first ages of the Church there appears a greater devotion to St. John the Baptist than to St. Joseph; nowadays the very reverse is the fact. Why is this if it be not because the worship of the spouse of Mary and the father of Jesus is better suited to us than that of the mighty saint who was the herald of His coming? There is no jealousy in heaven, and the great St. John, the very apostle of disinterested love, would willingly point to St. Joseph and say, as he did to Our Lord, 'He must increase, and I must decrease.' The

thought of the sweet saint who guarded Jesus and Mary in their weary flight through the wilderness was to be more useful to Christians than the remembrance of the stern voice which sounded through the desert."

Father Faber, who devotes to St. Joseph some exquisite pages in the second book of *The Blessed Sacrament,* says in his work on the "Precious Blood":

"It is by comparing God's choice of him with the office he was to fill, that we come to see the glory and the grandeur of St. Joseph, and to contemplate with reverent awe the heights of a holiness to which such familiarity with God was permitted."

The same devout writer says elsewhere:

"This is the immensity of his dignity. The incommunicable and ever-blessed paternity is in figure communicated to him. He is the foster-father of Jesus. To the world without he passes for His father. He exercises the authority of a father over Him, and performs for Him all the affectionate and anxious offices of a father. The unspeakable treasures of God, Jesus, and Mary, are committed to St. Joseph's keeping; and he is himself a treasure as well as the treasure-house of God. He is part of the scheme of redemption. What wonder theologians should tell us such great things of his copious graces and his mighty gifts?"

Let us conclude with these words spoken by Pope Pius IX.:

"I have seen a little picture which represents St. Joseph with the divine Infant, who points toward him, saying: *Ite ad Joseph!* To you I say the same. Go to Joseph! Have recourse with special confidence to St. Joseph, for his protection is most powerful, as he is the patron of the universal Church."

Appendix.

Maxims and Counsels of Saints and Spiritual Writers.

If you wish to raise a lofty edifice of perfection, take humility for your foundation.—*St. Thomas Aquinas:* Sermon X.

The first degree of humility is a cheerful and ready obedience.—*Rule of St. Benedict:* Ch. VII.

A beautiful flower is humility; beautiful is patience, obedience, meekness, modesty, and every other virtue; but the most beautiful is charity.—*Blessed Jourdain de Saxe:* Letter XXXIII.

He is most powerful who loves most.—*St. Gregory the Great: Life of St. Benedict,* Ch. XXXIII.

The best of all prayers is that in which we ask that God's holy will may be accomplished, both in ourselves and in others.—*Venerable Louis de Blois, O.S.B.*

God regards the motive and not the action. It is not the importance of the action that He considers, but the excellence of the intention, the love which prompted it.—*St. Gregory the Great, O.S.B.*

So great is the goodness of God in your regard, that, when you ask through ignorance for that which is not beneficial, He does not grant your

prayer in this matter, but gives you something better instead.—*St. Bernard, O. Cist.*

To love God truly one must have three hearts in one: a heart all on fire for God; a heart full of charity for his neighbor; and a heart of flint for himself.—*Bl. Benedict Joseph Labre.*

Happy is he who, when praised and glorified by others, does not regard himself as better than when humbled and despised; because a man is only what he is in the eyes of God and nothing more.—*St. Francis of Assisi: Minor Works,* Part IV.

The conquest of a city is of less importance to us than a victory gained over ourselves.—*St. Gregory the Great, O.S.B.*

The most efficacious sermon is a good example. Nothing better convinces those spoken to than a practical illustration of the counsel given.—*St. Bernard, O. Cist.: Sermons.*

Let us never voluntarily dwell upon the faults of others when they present themselves to our minds; instead of dwelling on them let us at once consider what there is of good in these persons. . . . No one should think or say anything of another which he would not wish thought or said of himself.—*St. Teresa.*

True perfection consists in a perfect love of God and our neighbor; the more perfectly a soul observes these two commandments, the more perfect does she also become.—*St. Teresa: Interior Castle,* Ch. II.

When poverty is faithfully observed in a monastery, there is no fear that perfection will fall to the ground; for it is poverty which preserves the monastic life. "The walls of poverty are very high and very strong," says St. Clare; hence she sought to shut in and surround monasteries with the walls of poverty and humility.—*St. Teresa: Way of Perfection.*

Above all things we should care for the sick, serving them as if they were Christ in person, because He has said: "I was sick and you visited Me. As long as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it to Me."—*Rule of St. Benedict:* Ch. XXXVI.

Let all thy care be to possess thy soul in peace and tranquillity. Let no accident be to thee a cause of ill humor.—*St. Vincent Ferrer: Spiritual Treatise.*

It is only the devil and his followers who ought to be sad; we, on the contrary, should always rejoice in the Lord.—*St. Francis Assisi: Monastic Conference,* II.

If thou art wise, expect to die every day; thus thou shalt keep thyself always ready and happy to depart on the great journey to thy eternal home. —*Bl. Henry Suso.*

Let us always remember the Last Judgment, after the example of St. Jerome, who, though a saint, never lost sight of it.—*St Teresa: Mansion 6th,* Ch. IX.

Death is welcome to one who has always feared God and faithfully served Him.—*Life of St. Teresa:* Ch. XXVII.

It is certain that no flower can bear fruit unless it dies; so a person will commence to bear fruit in Jesus Christ in proportion as he renounces himself, abandons himself, and dies to himself and to all things.—*Ven. John Tauler: Instit.,* Ch. XXII.

We do not wholly receive the treasure of God's love because we do not wholly give ourselves to Him.—*Life of St. Teresa:* Ch. II.

St. Francis of Assisi dwelt for entire hours upon these words: "My God and my All."

There is nothing more salutary than to meditate each day upon the torments a Man-God has endured for us. The wounds of Jesus Christ pierce the hardest of hearts, they inflame the coldest.—*St. Bonaventure.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi, meditating upon the sufferings of Jesus Christ, crucifix in hand, with ardent love cried out: "O Love! O Love! never will my heart cease to tell Thee that Thou art its love." With St. Philip Neri, let us often exclaim: "Jesus, my love!"

Jesus Christ crucified is our model. His wounds preach to us of the affections which should animate us, what we should be and what we should do.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Thomas Aquinas, during a visit which he made to St. Bonaventure, asked the latter from what books he had drawn the erudition, the unction which made his writings so admirable. Showing him a crucifix, he replied: "This is my book; it is the source of all I have written. It is this which has taught me the little that I know." Let us press the crucifix to our lips, begging our divine Saviour to instruct us, to give us His love.

The four extremities of the cross are ornamented with four precious pearls. Humility is placed at the foot, obedience occupies the right, patience the left; charity, the first and queen of virtues, burns in letters of gold at the head. These four virtues shine in a most striking manner in the Passion of Jesus Christ. They are the four principal fruits which we must gather from meditating on Jesus crucified.—*St. Bernard.*

Let us have a great devotion to the crucifix; let us often fix our eyes upon the image of Christ crucified, and meditate on the excess of His love. Let us frequently kiss the crucifix with ardent love and earnest desire to please Him in all things.

The name of Jesus is an impregnable rampart. There is no pearl, no ornament, that can be compared to the name of Jesus. We sound the harp's sweet harmonies when we pronounce the name of Jesus.—*Bl. Henry Suso: Spiritual Letters.*

The book of Psalms is a poem written in heaven. Those who are able to appreciate its value become angels. Had we only the Psalter, that would suffice during the entire course of our life for our spiritual

exercises, our readings, our prayers, and all other acts of adoration and homages which we should render to God.—*Ven. Louis de Blois, O.S.B.*

The whole end of our meditation should be to have it followed by good actions; for in it the soul considers how and what she must do to please God and how she must show by her works the love she bears Him.—*St. Teresa: Mansion 7th,* Ch. IV.

The humble, those who have a lowly opinion of themselves and love to be despised by others, please God the most. He makes it His delight to be with them, to pour upon them the treasures of His grace, to reveal to them His secrets, and to attract them sweetly to Himself.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

Our Saviour has said that it is necessary for him who would become greater than others to make himself the least. This is a truth all Christians believe. How is it so few conform their lives to it?—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Do not think you have made any progress in perfection until you regard yourself as the last of all, and desire that all others should be preferred to you, because it belongs to those who are great in the sight of God to be little in their own eyes.—*St. Teresa.*

Vain complacency, coupled with the desire that others would speak of us and praise us, is an evil which makes us forget God and spoils our holiest actions. There is no vice more pernicious to those who would make any progress in the spiritual life.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

What does it signify if we are calumniated, despised, outraged by men, if we are innocent before God and agreeable in His eyes? The saints made it their pleasure to be little and abject in the hearts of all.—*St. Teresa.*

The most profound degree of humility is to receive humiliations and abjections with the same complacency that vain persons do the greatest honors.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

One of the best means to acquire humility is profoundly to engrave in our minds this maxim: Each one is really only what he is in the eyes of God, nothing more.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

Our principal business should be to conquer ourselves, and to become more perfect every day in this practice. It is particularly necessary that we should apply ourselves to be victorious in little temptations, regarding, *e. g.,* vivacity, suspicions, jealousy, indolence, vanity. By so doing we shall obtain the strength to resist greater ones.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

Mortification of the appetite is the A B C of the spiritual life. He who does not know how to suppress the vice of gluttony in himself will only with great difficulty triumph over his other vices. He will be compelled to wage a continual war with them, if he would not have them govern him entirely.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

One of the things which keeps us far from perfection is, without doubt, our tongue. When one has arrived at that point that he does not sin with the

tongue he is perfect, according to the Holy Ghost. This is why we must speak little and well—little and with simplicity, with charity, and in a manner that will make virtue appear amiable.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

According to the doctrine of the saints, one of the principal means to lead a Christian and exemplary life is to observe modesty of the eyes. If there is nothing more necessary than this virtue to preserve piety in the soul and to edify our neighbor, there is nothing which tends more to sensuality and gives more scandal than the opposite fault.—*Rodriguez.*

Believe me, the mortification of the senses—of the sight, the hearing, the tongue—is more beneficial than to wear a chain of iron or a hair-shirt.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

We must above all labor to mortify, to root out our predominant passion; I mean by this, that inclination, that vice, that bad habit which governs us and leads us into sin. This is the king. When he is captured the battle is won.—*Rodriguez.*

St. Ignatius frequently said to a novice who was of an extremely vivacious and fiery temperament: "My son, conquer yourself, and you will have in heaven a crown more splendid than many others who are more meek of character." One day the master of novices complained of him as being unmanageable. The saint replied: "I think he of whom you complain has made more progress in virtue in a few months than another whom you praise so much has made in a year."

It might be supposed of St. Francis de Sales that he was of a character naturally sweet. It was by virtue alone that he acquired this admirable sweetness with which he ravished all hearts. Anger, he was heard to say, was the passion he had most difficulty in conquering.

Whenever one feels excited with too much ardor, or is over-anxious to perform some action, no matter how holy it may be, if it be possible it is better to defer it till another time, when the heart is tranquil, lest self-love insensibly steal in and soil the purity of our intention.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Do not think too highly of your own ideas. If your advice is asked, give it frankly, but with perfect indifference as to whether it be followed or rejected. Follow rather the advice of others than your own in all things permissible.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

One *Blessed be God* in the time of adversity is worth more than *I thank you* said a thousand times in prosperity.—*St. John of Avila.*

There is no sign more certain that one is of the number of the elect than, while leading a Christian life, to be the subject of sufferings, desolations and trials.—*St. Louis Gonzaga.*

A certain merchant begged St. Teresa to recommend him to God. She did so; and having occasion to speak to him some time afterwards, she said: "I have prayed for you, and it has been revealed to me that your name is written in the book of life. As a proof of this I give you notice that, from this time henceforth, nothing will prosper with you in this

world." And this was verified. But a short time intervened, when all the vessels he had upon the sea perished. His friends assisted him, and came to his rescue with another vessel to try his fortune again; this likewise was lost. Finding himself in poverty he became content to possess but God. He finished his life in sanctity.

If the Lord sends you great tribulations, it is a sign that He has great designs upon you, and that He wills that you become a saint. Would you become a great saint, pray that He may send you sufferings. There is no wood more proper to enkindle and feed the fire of divine love than the wood of the cross.—*St. Ignatius Loyola.*

Be assured that we shall obtain more grace and merit in one day by suffering patiently the afflictions which come to us from God or from our neighbor than we could acquire in ten years by mortifications and other exercises which are of our own choice.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

My sisters, learn to suffer something for Jesus Christ without letting others perceive it.—*St. Teresa.*

If you look upon the ground at the rod which Moses used before Pharao, it appears a frightful serpent; but if you regard it in the hand of Moses, it is a wand with which he performed the greatest prodigies. So it is with tribulations. Considered in themselves, they are horrible; but when one views them in the hand of God, they become sweet and delicious.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

Meekness is a virtue which supposes a noble soul; that is, those who possess this virtue are superior to all one may say of them or do to them. Though they may receive indignities from others in word or action, they preserve their tranquillity and lose not their peace of soul.—*St. Thomas Aquinas.*

The highest degree of meekness consists in serving, honoring, and treating kindly those who are our inferiors and who treat us with ingratitude and insolence.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

Can there be anything really worthy of disturbing our peace? Should the universe be overthrown, I would not trouble myself. There is nothing in the world that can be compared to peace of heart. Preserve it at any cost.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

The remedies against anger are, first, to prevent it, if possible, or to occupy the mind with thoughts which tend to allay the movements of the heart when excited; second, to imitate the apostle, who, in the time of tempest, had recourse to God, to whom it belongs to give peace to the heart; third, to do nothing, to say nothing, during the time the heart is agitated, relating to that which gave rise to anger; fourth, to oblige ourselves to make acts of sweetness and humility toward those with whom we are inclined to be angry.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

The perfection of a person in a community consists in an exact obedience to the Rules. He who observes them most faithfully will without doubt be the most perfect.—*Rodriguez.*

The companions of St. Aloysius Gonzaga attest that they never saw him fail in a single point of the Rule.

The predestination of Religious is attached to a love of their Rule, and to the exact performance of what is their duty in virtue of their vocation.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

Among the papers of St. Bonaventure was found the following, written in his hand: "I have not entered religion to live as the others live, but to live as they ought to live, according to the spirit of the institute, and in a perfect observance of the Rule. This is why, upon entering religion, I was given the Rules to read, not the lives of others. I accepted them voluntarily, and took them for the direction of the life I should lead. I ought, then, to observe them all, even if I saw no one else observe them."

St. Francis de Sales paid the highest praise to a General of the Carthusians who was so punctual in observing the Rule that not even the newest novice could be more exact.

St. John Berchmans, being on his death-bed, asked for a book of the Rules which he had so faithfully observed. When it was given to him, he clasped it lovingly and said: "Holding this book, I die with confidence and joy."

Obedience is without doubt more meritorious than any austerity. What austerity is greater than to keep the will continually submissive and obedient?—*St. Catharine of Bologna.*

A great means to preserve one's peace and tranquillity of heart continually is to receive as coming from the hands of God all things, whatever they may be and in whatever manner they may come.—*St. Dorothy.*

It is plainly evident that he who feels inclined to perform a good work when it is contrary to obedience yields to a temptation; because when God fills a heart with inspirations the first is that of obedience. —*St. Teresa.*

Perfect obedience is shown in three things—in the execution, in the will, and in the judgment. In the execution, by doing promptly, joyously, and punctually what the Superior orders; in the will, by willing only what the Superior wills; in the judgment, by being of the same sentiments as the Superior.—*St. Ignatius Loyola.*

He who is truly obedient makes no distinction between one thing and another, one employment and another; he desires nothing else but to execute faithfully what is commanded.—*St. Bernard.*

The excellence of obedience consists not in doing the will of a Superior who is sweet and good, who commands more by asking as a favor than by authority, but in being submissive to the yoke of one who is imperious, rigorous, ill-humored and apparently never satisfied.—*St. Bernard.*

Unless you do violence to yourself, and unless you arrive at that point when it becomes indifferent to you whether you have one Superior or another, do not persuade yourself that you are a spiritual man

and a faithful observer of your vows.—*St. John of the Cross.*

When the Superior orders a thing, it is not he who speaks; it is God. The Superior is but a trumpet through which the voice of God passes. This is the key of obedience; this is why those who aim at perfection obey in all things so promptly, making no difference between one Superior or another, obeying in the same manner the lowest in charge the same as the highest, those who are imperfect as well as the perfect. They pay no attention to the qualities nor the person of the Superior, but to God alone, who is always and at all times the same, equally worthy of our submission, on account of His perfections and His authority, which never change.—*Rodriguez.*

Do you know why it is that many who are a long time in religion, practicing so many acts of obedience each day, do not acquire the habit of this virtue? It is because they do not obey to do the will of God. This should be the reason of our obedience.—*Rodriguez.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi regarded always the person of God in her Superiors. In obeying them she desired to do the will of God; all that her Superior commanded her seemed ordered by God. On this account she always experienced inexpressible satisfaction in obeying.

To be truly obedient it is not sufficient to do what is commanded; we must do still more: obey without hesitation and without question. Hold it for certain

that what is commanded is what you can do best and most perfectly, although it may not appear so to you. —*St. Philip Neri.*

Those who make profession of following the maxims of Jesus Christ should greatly esteem simplicity. Although, in the judgment of the wise ones of the world, there is nothing more contemptible than simplicity, it is, nevertheless, a very amiable virtue, because it directly conducts to the kingdom of God, and likewise gains for us the affections of men.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

Those who possess the virtue of simplicity make themselves loved even by those who are deceitful.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Simplicity is nothing else but a pure and simple act of charity; its only end is the love of God. Our soul is truly simple when we have only this end in all we do.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

The office of simplicity is to make us go straight to God, without listening to human respect, without consulting our own interest; to make us speak frankly and from our heart; to make us act simply, without any mingling of hypocrisy or artifice; finally, to keep us far from duplicity or deceit.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

When a soul that is simple wishes to say or do something, it is content to consider if it be expedient to do so, without taking time to consider what others may think or say. After having decided upon what to do, she does it, and thinks no more of it. If thoughts of what others may say

come to mind, she makes no account of them, because she seeks only to please God, not creatures, and this is all that the love of God requires.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

It does not suffice to do good things. We must do more; we must do them well, after the example of Jesus Christ, of whom it is written: "He hath done all things well." Let us, then, study to perform all our actions in the spirit of Jesus Christ; that is, in the manner He performed His actions, proposing to ourselves the same end; otherwise every work, good perhaps in itself, will bring upon us punishment rather than rewards.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Many persuade themselves that they have no true sorrow for their sins if they do not practice many and great corporal austerities. Let us learn, nevertheless, that he does a good penance who studies to please God alone, at all times and in all things. This is a very perfect thing and of great merit.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

The Saints arrived at sanctity by devoting themselves to the sanctification of all their actions; they did all they believed Our Lord asked of them in the most perfect manner possible.

St. John Berchmans, that servant of God who labored continually to become a saint by performing in the most perfect manner possible his ordinary actions, had taken for his motto this sentence, which he studied frequently: *"Pœnitentia maxima vita communis."* "My greatest penance is the ordinary life." Perfection in the common life; let that be our aim.

Our Lord does not measure our perfection by the number and greatness of the works we do, but by the manner in which we do them; and this manner is the love with which and by which we perform them. Actions are more perfect according as the love with which they are performed is more pure and more perfect.—*St. John of the Cross.*

The Divine Office is one of the most excellent of actions. In reciting it we celebrate the praises of God, which is the ministry which belongs to the angels. We should not then acquit ourselves of this duty through habit and without piety, but with all the devotion of which we are capable.—*St. Magdalene of Pazzi.*

The examination of conscience which all pious persons are in the habit of making every night before taking their rest is a great help, not only to conquer our evil inclinations, but to acquire virtue and to perform our ordinary actions well. It is not so much to discover the faults of which we have been guilty during the day that we make this examen, as to conceive a lively sorrow for them, to form the resolution not to fall again into them, to do penance for them and, especially, to advance in virtue.—*Blessed John of Avila.*

Be careful lest you think the time lost that you give to acquit yourself perfectly of your employment. It is very agreeable to God to leave our exercises of piety which are not of obligation, when duty calls us elsewhere.—*St. Teresa.*

Do not fear that those occupations which come under the rule of obedience, no matter how great or

how multiplied they may be, can be a hindrance to union with God. If they are performed in the presence of God and for His glory, on the contrary, they unite one more intimately with God; for how can that which unites our will with God's will keep us afar from Him?—*St. Francis de Sales.*

Exterior occupations were not for St. Magdalene of Pazzi an obstacle to recollection; they were not even a cause of distraction. "It is the same to me," she said one day, "whether I am ordered to go to pray with my Sisters in the choir or to do some manual labor. Oftentimes I have found more of God in work than in prayer."

One of the great obstacles to the well-doing of our actions is that while we do one thing we think of another that we have done or that we are yet to do. The manner of doing each action well is to give attention only to the one we are actually performing, doing it as perfectly as we can, and when it is done think no more of it, lest it prevent us from occupying ourselves well with what we have on hand.—*John of Avila.*

"Age quod agis." "What thou doest do with all thy heart."

One obstacle to the goodness of our actions is precipitation. Look well to this fault, which is a capital enemy of true devotion. No action done with precipitation is well done. Those who are traveling find it best to go always with an equal step.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

Be self-possessed, said another wise director of consciences, in all that you do. Thus you will avoid many faults. One does that fast enough which is well done, "*Sat cito si sat bene.*"

Still another obstacle to the well-doing of our actions is worry and solicitude. Great affairs do not distract us so much as small ones when these are numerous. This is why we must receive them peacefully, striving to do them in order one after the other, without anxiety. By so doing, they become for us occasions of much merit.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

The works of God are almost always done little by little; they have their commencement and their progress. One must not pretend to do all in a moment, in haste, nor think all is lost if one does not become perfect at once. We must always advance, but without anxiety. Pray much and make use of the means suggested by the Holy Ghost, paying no attention to the false maxims of the world.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Vincent de Paul was very slow to decide upon any matter. Nevertheless, his slowness, which to some appeared excessive, never had any bad results, never injured any affair of which he had charge. Every one was surprised to see that he succeeded in all he undertook. Still more, at the same time that everything prospered with him he acquired treasures of merit in heaven, because charity animated all that he did for his neighbor.

Among many excellent means that are given to perform our actions well, I recommend this to you:

To perform each of your actions as if it were to be the last one of your life. Ask yourself while you do it this question: If I knew that this was the last hour of my life, would I do it in this manner?—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

All that we do receives its value from our conformity to the will of God; for instance, if I take recreation because it is the will of God I merit more than if I suffered death without having that intention. Keep well in your mind this thought, and remember it in all your actions, in imitation of the carpenter, who passes all the boards he uses under the plane. It is thus you will do all with perfection.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

It was this truth of which a Jesuit Brother was well convinced when he said that when at table, taking his repast, he did as much as the apostle of the Indies, because St. Francis Xavier in preaching the Gospel simply did the will of God, and he himself accomplished that will when he was in the refectory during the time the Rule required it.

If it happens that you say or do something which is not well received by all, you should not for this reason reflect much upon it, because it is beyond a doubt that it is self-love which makes us seek to be approved in what we say or do. Simplicity abandons to Providence the success of actions done for Him.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

Christian prudence consists in judging, speaking, and acting as the Eternal Wisdom, when robed in our mortal nature, judged, spoke, and acted, and in governing one's self in every circumstance accord-

ing to the maxims of faith, not according to the false sentiments of the world, or according to the weak light of its understanding.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

God is a being very simple. This is why, if we desire to make ourselves, as far as it is possible, like to Him, we should endeavor to be by virtue what God is by nature; that is, to have a heart simple, a mind simple, an intention simple, a manner simple, a language simple; to walk honestly, without artifice, with an exterior conformable to our interior, regarding God alone in all our actions, whom alone we should desire to please.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

A friend will visit his friend in the morning to wish him a good-day; in the evening, a good-night; taking also an opportunity to converse with him during the day. In like manner make visits to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, if your duties permit it. It is especially at the foot of the altar that one prays well. In all your visits to Our Saviour, frequently offer His precious blood to the Eternal Father. You will find these visits very conducive to your growth in the knowledge and love of Our Lord.—*St. Magdalene of Pazzi.*

Make frequent use of short, indulgenced prayers, aspirations, and ejaculations. St. Francis de Sales and St. Thomas Aquinas often made ejaculatory prayers. Every time that St. Ignatius heard the clock strike he recollected himself and elevated his heart to God. St. Vincent de Paul was exact in observing the same practice.

Let us bless God that we are children of His Mother; let us imitate her and consider our great happiness in having her as our patroness and advocate. The devotions we practice in honor of the glorious Virgin Mary, however trifling they may be, are very pleasing to her divine Son, and He rewards them with eternal glory.—*St. Teresa: Book of the Foundations,* Ch. I.

Let the name of Mary be ever on your lips; let it be indelibly engraven on your heart. If you are under her protection, you have nothing to fear; if she is propitious, you will arrive at the port of salvation.—*St. Bernard, O. Cist.*

I have noticed that all those who have true devotion to St. Joseph and render him special honor are very much advanced in virtue, for he takes great care of souls who recommend themselves to him; and I have never asked him anything which he did not obtain for me.—*Life of St. Teresa:* Ch. VI.

The way by which we reach God is indisputably by means of works of mercy.—*St. Angelo of Merici.*

Almost all the faults that persons in religion commit against their Rules and in their exercises of piety arise from the facility with which they lose sight of the presence of God.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

There is a certain manner of prayer most simple and very useful; it is, to be habitually in the presence of God. And this sight of God will produce in us an intimate union with Him, a simple and perfect intention. Oh, how precious is this manner of prayer!—*St. Francis de Sales.*

"Think of Me, and I will think of thee," said Our Lord to a saint. He would have him understand that the continual remembrance of God is an excellent means not only of not offending God, but also of being enriched with His favors.

It is certain that God desires that which is most advantageous to us much more than we desire it ourselves. He knows better than we by what means that which is best for us must arrive. The choice of means is entirely in His hands, since it is He who disposes and regulates all things in the world. It is also certain that in events which happen, that which befalls us will always be best for us.—*St. Augustine.*

Let us endeavor to conceive a great diffidence in ourselves, and always to have this truth present to our mind, that of ourselves we are good for nothing, that we can but spoil the designs of God. If we keep this thought in view, it will cause us to depend entirely upon God and bring us often to Him to obtain His help.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

God takes care of those who place all their thoughts in Him and depend interiorly on Him, serving Him with great fidelity. He protects us in proportion to our confidence in Him. He comes to our help in every danger, having an infinite love for souls who rest in Him.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

St. Francis of Assisi and his sons had nothing, yet they never suffered for clothing to cover them nor for food to sustain them. When he sent his companions anywhere to preach, he addressed them in

the words of the prophet: *"Jacta super Dominum curam tuam et ipse te enutriet,"* "Cast your care upon the Lord, and He will sustain you." In speaking of his community and of God, he would say: "We have a mother who is very poor, but we have a Father who is very rich."

When we propose to undertake something belonging to the service of God, having invoked His light and feeling assured that it is His will, we must make use of the human means which are necessary and proper to execute the orders of divine Providence; nevertheless, it is not upon these means we must rely, but solely upon the divine assistance; from this we must expect success, being well persuaded that whatever may happen will be for our advantage.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

In our various employments and in the cares which attend them, we must not be disquieted nor act with haste. Devote a reasonable and moderate attention to them, and then leave them to divine Providence, giving place to Him to regulate things and manifest His will. Be certain that when God wills that an undertaking succeed delay never harms it; there is always more of Him in proportion as there is less of ourselves in it.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

When we have undertaken a work for God, certain that it is His will, it is necessary to be courageous and persevere to the end, no matter how multiplied or great the obstacles may be. Divine Providence never fails in things which we have commenced by His order.—*St. Vincent de Paul.* Never

was this saint discouraged by difficulties. In proportion as he saw obstacles, he displayed more constancy and resolution.

Weak souls, who are filled with self-love and a desire to be esteemed, at the first sign of the slightest calumny take fire, burn with indignation, and can not recover their peace without many words escaping them. It is not thus with generous souls, who seek only to please God. They know well that God sees their innocence, and that He will not fail to defend them in the way which is most for their good.—*St. Augustine.*

When we find ourselves in danger we should not lose courage, but confide perfectly in Our Lord. The greater the peril, the nearer is the help of Him who calls Himself our aid in tribulation.—*St. Ambrose.*

St. Ignatius was on the sea at one time when a great tempest arose. The sails of the vessel were torn to pieces; all on board, except the saint, were in fright and tears; they expected nothing but death. St. Ignatius alone was tranquil and without fear. He was calm because these words were present to his mind: "The winds and the sea obey the Lord." "The tempest did not arise without His permission," he said, "and without it we can not be lost. The Lord is master. If He wills that I perish in the waters, I consent, I will it. I confide in His mercy."

It suffices for a soul that loves God as it ought to love Him to know that a thing is right, and that it will redound to His glory to do it immediately, with-

out hesitation, with a desire to please Him, and to show Him its love. O my God, how easy Thou makest the most difficult things to those who love Thee ardently, and who abandon all for Thy love!—*St. Teresa.*

St. Teresa ardently desired a reform in her Rule in order to be more detached from all things and to follow more perfectly her vocation. Nevertheless, she desired it in such a spirit that if the Lord had made her understand that He wished her to abandon the undertaking entirely, she would have done so instantly without any pain. It was to put in execution this great desire which burned within her, namely, to do only what is most pleasing to God, that she made a vow to do always that which she knew to be the most perfect. For many it might be rash to make such a vow; but in doing this, St. Teresa felt that God asked it of her. She never failed in one point to keep her vow.

The Church, in the prayers in which she invokes St. Ignatius Loyola, makes us understand that the true and distinctive character of this saint was to do all for the greater glory of God, and indeed he constantly inculcated upon others the importance of doing all things *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.*

"Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Not seeking a reward,
But as Thyself hast loved me,
O ever loving Lord!

"E'en so I love Thee, and will love,
And in Thy praise will sing,
Solely because Thou art my God
And my eternal King."

—*Hymn of St. Francis Xavier.*

"All for the greater glory of God!" St. Ignatius Loyola repeats these words three hundred and seventy-six times in his Constitutions.—*Suarez: de Relig.,* Vol. IV; Book VIII, Ch. VI; No. 1.

It is greater to practice self-denial than to raise the dead.—*Nolarci.*

He who nurtures in himself the germ of trouble and uneasiness, that is to say, opposition between his private judgment and the rules of obedience, will never enjoy peace of heart nor tranquillity of mind. —*Letter of St. Ignatius on Obedience.*

In our ministry to men we must imitate the angels. They do not neglect any means to procure the salvation of men, but the result, whether good or bad, causes them to lose nothing of their blessed and eternal peace.—*Ribadeneira:* Book V; Ch. II.

I will carefully consider how, on the day of judgment, I would wish to have discharged my office or my duty; and the way that I would wish to have done it then, I shall do now.—*Spiritual Exercises.*

Obedience, by its sacrifices, resembles martyrdom. They who, by a generous effort, make up their minds to obey, acquire great merit.—*St. Ignatius: Letter* 50.

Place before your eyes as models for imitation not the weak and cowardly, but the fervent and courageous.—*St. Ignatius: Letter* 50.

To conquer himself is the grandest victory that man can gain.—*St. Ignatius: Letter* 51.

The despising of one's self in the midst of honors and riches, and disdain for all glory, should be esteemed more highly than corporal mortification.—*Bartoli.*

We must practice both *interior* and *exterior* mortification, but with this difference, that we must give ourselves up to the first *particularly, always, and without exception;* to the second, on the contrary, only as far as circumstances and the particular condition of persons and occasions will permit.—*Bartoli:* Book III.

One ought to obey a Superior not on account of his wisdom, goodness, or other qualities which God has given him, but only because he is God's representative, and acts by His authority, who has said: "He that heareth you heareth Me; he that despiseth you despiseth Me."—*St. Ignatius: Letter on Obedience.*

In speaking to the sad and sore of heart present to them a cheerful and serene countenance; speak with all sweetness, so as to restore them the more easily to peace and tranquillity, overcoming in this way one extreme by another.—*St. Ignatius: Instruction to Fathers Salmeron and Bröet.*

Never accept as undoubtedly true what an accuser says, until after you have heard the accused and found him guilty. Do not lightly condemn the actions of others; we must consider the intention of our neighbor, which is often good and pure, although the act itself seems blameworthy. Treat sinners as a good mother treats her sick child; she

lavishes more caresses on her child when he is sick than when he is well.—*Bartoli.*

Vanity and vainglory are vices born of ignorance and blind self-love.—*St. Ignatius.*

Put not off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.—*Bartoli:* Book IV.

Before choosing let us examine well whether the attachment we feel for an object springs solely from the love of God.—*Spiritual Exercises.*

If God gives you much suffering it is a sign that He wishes to make you a great saint.—*Bartoli:* Book IV.

The value of a thing is only its worth before God. —*Ibid.*

Do you wish to be always happy? Then be always humble and obedient.—*A. Costerus.*

The life of a Christian is a perpetual warfare: but the strife is but for a few fleeting years, and then it will be succeeded by an eternity of peace and glory. —*Father Clare, S.J.*

Every time you hear the clock strike, remember you are not the master of the next hour, and think, at the same time, of the Passion Our Lord was pleased to suffer to gain eternity for you.—*Blessed Labre Cordigère.*

The subject ought to behold in his superior, not the man, but Him for whose love he has sacrificed his will; and the fewer qualities the superior has, the greater merit there is in obeying him.—*St. Francis: Monastic Conference,* 4.

God afflicts man for several reasons: 1st, To increase his merit; 2d, That he may retain His grace; 3d, To punish his faults; 4th, To show forth His glory and His other attributes.—*St. Anthony of Padua: Sermon for Lent,* 31.

The holiest man is not he who holds the holiest station, but he who best fulfils the duties of the state in which divine Providence has placed him.—*St. Lidwine.*

I especially exhort you, my brethren in the Lord, while engaged with the world, not to argue, nor be boisterous, nor to judge others, but to be gentle, peaceful, reserved, agreeable, humble; in fine, to speak kindly to all, as it behooves you to do.—*St. Francis: Rule of the Friars Minor.*

Happy is he who does not excuse himself, but receives blame and humiliation silently, even when the fault is involuntary.—*St. Francis: Monastic Conference,* 11.

It is safer and easier to decline presents entirely than to determine upon those which one may receive without danger; for it is not easy for a man who

has commenced to receive them to know where it is proper to stop.—*St. Elzear, Third Order.*

Be always patient and agreeable; if any one has offended you, offer to God the pain you have suffered. By this mark I will know if you are God's servant, *viz.,* if you bring back kindly to God the brother who has gone astray, and if you never cease to love the man who has been very culpable.—*St. Francis: First Letter to Brother Elias.*

In every undertaking, temporal as well as spiritual, do your part, leave God to do His, and hold your peace.—*St. Joseph of Cupertino.*

Charity is a fire; but three things can extinguish it: the whirlwind of pride, the inundations of gluttony and luxury, and the dense fumes of avarice.—*St. Anthony of Padua: Sermons.*

The surest means of obtaining God's grace is by holy indifference, and by resignation to His holy will.—*St. Joseph of Cupertino.*

Happy is he who has charity for every one, and who does not desire, moreover, that they have charity for him; and happy, too, is he who performs great services for his neighbor, yet does not trouble himself about receiving like services in return.—*Bl. Egidius of Assisi.*

If we understood the nature of purgatory, we would be more anxious to free the dear souls there.

O! purgatory, how terrible thou art!—*Ven. Mary Cherubine of the Clares.*

The sacrifice of our will is the best and most acceptable offering that we can make to God.—*St. Joseph of Cupertino.*

The best perfection is to do ordinary things in a perfect manner. Constant fidelity in little things is a great and heroic virtue.—*St. Bonaventure: Mirror of the Novices.*

He who is charged with the care and direction of others, and who holds the highest place, should be as the least of all and the servant of his brethren, and use toward each of them the condescension which he would wish to be shown to himself if he were their inferior.—*St. Francis: In Second Letter to the Faithful.*

May your discourse be seasoned with the precious salt of prudence and charity. Be not too serious nor yet unseasonably jocose nor immoderately gay; let your manner be agreeable and regulated by Christian modesty.—*St. Leonard of Port Maurice.*

There are many who are given to prayer and works of zeal, who undergo self-privations and mortification, but who, for a word which seems injurious to them, or for some little misunderstanding, immediately take offense; such are, indeed, not poor in spirit.—*St. Francis: Monastic Conference,* 14.

He is truly obedient who permits himself to be removed without murmuring, who is indifferent to the office given him, or does not desire any other place, and who, elevated to an important position, remains as humble as before.—*St. Francis: Examples,* 1.

If you are faithful in doing the will of God in this life, your own will shall be accomplished throughout eternity. The Heart of Jesus is at least worth yours. Leave all, and you will find all in the Sacred Heart. How sweet it will be to die after having had a constant devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus—of Him who will be Our Judge.—*Bl. Margaret Mary.*

Consider the answer which Christ gave the scribe. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not whereon to lay His head." As if He wished to insinuate this sentiment —why should you wish to follow Me for worldly wealth, when I have no lodging of My own, being more poorly provided than the very beasts of the field and the birds of the air? O wonderful poverty of this sovereign King! This poverty, however, is of such immense value as to be able to purchase the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 3). The true disciples of Jesus Christ ought, like their master, to have no coffers in which to hoard their treasures (as foxes "have their holes"), and they ought not to be like birds who build their nests on high; that is, they ought not to seek high and dignified employment, but court humility and obscurity. Their Master was "poor and in labors

from His youth" (Ps. lxxxvii. 16). Ponder the import of the Prophet's words: "Though thou be exalted as an eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord" (Abdias, 4).—*Baxter: Meditations.*

There is nothing that will make your heart more conformable to the Heart of Jesus than sincerity, simplicity, and humility.—*Bl. Margaret Mary.*

In all your actions avoid haste and eagerness, endeavoring to form your exterior as well as your interior upon the model of Jesus Christ and His Sacred Heart. Employ well the present time without being uneasy about the future.—*Bl. Margaret Mary.*

Striving after perfection, is another way of saying "self-conquest."—*Fr. Dignam, S.J.*

To brood over our sufferings is poison to the soul, so also is pondering over the faults of others. Count as a fault each time you think of any one's faults without thinking of their good qualities and praising God for them. We were created to praise. How peaceful will be the death of one who has never allowed himself to judge or say an unkind word! He will find at his judgment the Sacred Heart to be an open tabernacle where he will rest forever.—*Ibid.*

To have a smile for all is a great means of doing good. But only those who try know how hard it is. We shall succeed better if we learn to smile at God; for He, dear Lord, loves to see us smile at Him.

and, like His creatures, He is pleased with our cheerfulness.—*Ibid.*

Severity toward ourselves should render us more meek, indulgent, and affable toward others. If our neighbor's act has one hundred sides, we should always look at it from its most favorable side.—*Ibid.*

I will spare no effort to maintain a constant peace and interior joy.—*Father Schneider, S.J.*

How should we employ our time? (1) We should keep steadily to our spiritual duties; (2) Fulfil the duties of our state of life; (3) Do what we owe to our station; (4) Fill up our spare time well; (5) Do even our least actions in a spirit of faith and love. You will never feel any sacrifice if you love. Look at the intensity of love and the loyalty of the saints; these ought to be a stimulus for us. In all circumstances let our prayer be: *"Non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat."* It will bring us strength and consolation, and will render us cheerful and ready to bear every hardship. Glory is only to be earned by the cross.—*Father Clare, S.J.*

Try to be unnoticed except when called on to come forward in the cause of God and our neighbor. With what zeal ought we not to labor for the poor, so especially dear to our blessed Lord, and how ready we should be at all times to comfort and encourage them in their sorrow and sufferings.—*Ibid.*

If we would please God we must make up our minds to trample upon human respect, to disregard the opinions of men, and to reject all fear of what

the world will say, whenever there is a question of performing our duty.—*Ibid.*

Break off prayer or any occupation for your suffering neighbor's sake; but, like Mary, have Christ with you whithersoever you go. Be assured that nothing brings so much consolation and sweetness to souls that love God as leaving Christ for Christ.—*St. Philip Neri.*

When you cannot obtain justice, suffer and be silent. Lay your case in secret before God, and He will turn all things to your good.

What folly is this, O my God? Why are we so concerned at being falsely accused by all men, if we are innocent before Thee?—*St. Teresa.*

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you."—1 *Pet.* v. 7.

Jesus is ever to be found in the tabernacle. In trial or sorrow look not to men for comfort, but seek Jesus as your friend, and with Him alone will you find perfect peace.

What can the world give thee without Jesus? To be without Jesus is a grievous hell; to be with Jesus is a sweet paradise.—*The Imitation.*

"You shall seek Me, and shall find Me when you shall seek Me with all your heart."—*Jer.* xxix. 13.

Learn of Mary on Calvary so to assist at holy Mass that you may die to yourself and live only for God and your neighbor.

The most mortified will be the most tenderly caressed by the Heart of Jesus. The most charitable will be the best loved by the Heart of Jesus. The most silent will be the best instructed by the Sacred Heart. The most obedient will have the most credit and power with the Heart of Jesus.—*Bl. Margaret Mary.*

Jesus wills that you should be attentive to Him and prompt to follow His lights and movements. Jesus loves you, and will not permit you to perish while you have confidence in Him. United in spirit to the choir of angels, pray frequently and earnestly for the conversion of sinners, the perseverance of the sick and agonizing, and the release of the souls in purgatory. O Jesus, form my heart according to Thy Heart, and then my life, whole and entire, will flow on according to Thy good pleasure.—*St. Gertrude.*

God has exalted Mary above all creatures, so in your heart and soul she must reign supreme after Him. Consider what is wanting in your reverence, love, and devotion.

The Mother of God is the ladder of heaven. God came down to earth by this ladder, that men might use the same means to climb up to Him in heaven.—*St. Fulgentius.*

Strive, like Mary, to fulfil faithfully, and for God, the ordinary duties of your state, especially those which are repugnant to you.

Nothing, however trifling, done for God's sake, will go unrewarded.—*The Imitation.*

Self-contempt and perfect union with the divine will: these are the main points of the Christian life. —*St. Paul of the Cross: "Passion Flowers."*

Have you ever noticed rocks in the sea, beaten by the tempest? A furious wave dashes against the rock, another and yet another does likewise, yet the rock is unmoved. But look at it after the storm has subsided, and you will see that the flood has but served to wash and purify it of the defilement it had contracted during the calm. Hereafter I wish you to be as a rock. A wave dashes against you? Silence! It assails you ten, a hundred, a thousand times? Silence! Say, at most, in the midst of the storm, "My Father, my Father, I am all Thine! O dear, O sweet will of God, I adore thee!"—*Ibid.*

Remember that true holiness is accompanied by pains and tribulations from within and without, by attacks of visible and invisible enemies, by trials of body and mind, by desolations and prolonged aridities; "and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12), that is to say, all sorts of trials from demons, from men, and from our rebellious flesh.—*Ibid.*

God usually deprives His servants, for a time, of all consolation, that they may learn to serve Him through pure love, and become truly faithful servants. He deprives them of spiritual delights, even on the most solemn occasions, to test their faith and fidelity. *"Sursum corda,"* then; let us lift up our hearts and generously serve our great God and Our Lord Jesus in faith and pure love.—*Ibid.*

The best way to acquire that peace which is born of the love of God, the inexhaustible Source of all virtues, is to accept all tribulations, whether spiritual or temporal, as coming directly from the paternal hand of God; to look upon all unpleasant events as very costly gifts presented to us by our heavenly Father; to repeat often the sacred words of Our Saviour: "Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. xi. 26).—*Ibid.*

When our pious undertakings meet with little success, let us not be troubled; when God wills anything to be done for His glory He will not fail to urge on the work until it is accomplished.—*Ibid.*

Suffering is but brief; joy will be eternal.

The indulgenced ejaculation which the Passionists call "the offering" is this: "Eternal Father, I offer Thee the precious blood of Jesus, in satisfaction for my sins, and for the wants of holy Church." It is indulgenced one hundred days for every time we say it "with at least contrite hearts and devotion." But after the words "for the wants of holy Church" we may add any intention we please without losing the indulgence. So we make it as follows: "Eternal Father, I offer Thee the precious blood of Jesus, in satisfaction for my sins, for the wants of holy Church, for the conversion of sinners, and for the suffering souls in purgatory." We add these two intentions because they are the best in point of charity.—*Edmund Hill, C.P.: Devotion to the Passion.*

Indulgenced ejaculatory prayer for the renewal of the religious profession: "Heart of Jesus, Victim of

Love, make me a living and holy sacrifice to Thee, and pleasing to God!"—*Ind.* 50 *Days: Pius X., Feb.* 27, 1907.

The saints were not satisfied with refraining from doing to others what they would not wish done to themselves; they did to others what they would wish done to themselves; or, rather, forgetting themselves, they thought only of God and their neighbor. It has been wisely remarked that the harder they were on themselves, the more lenient and condescending they were toward others. Holy humility kept them in spirit under the feet of every one, and made them believe that they were unworthy of the least regard. Far from showing themselves exacting, they thought that too much attention and kindness were paid them; hence, they expressed profound gratitude for the least services. Nothing deterred them, except obedience, when there was question of obliging others. Let us be polite in the least details of life, with the politeness inspired by charity and the spirit of faith.—*Demore.*

Endeavor to be ready to work or rest, to live or die, only as God wishes.—*Bowden.*

I wish, with all my heart, to be fortified by the Sacraments before I die; but I have the hardihood to prefer the providence of my Lord and my God to all the Sacraments; and I think this is the safest preparation for death.—*St. Gertrude.*

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work."—*John* iv. 34.

"Behold," says Christ to His disciples, "I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and simple as doves" (Matt. x. 16). Thus He wishes the serpent's wisdom to be united with the simplicity of the dove in the character of His apostles. He requires that they should be prudent, in seizing proper occasions and times of doing good to their neighbors; simple, in acting with sincerity and purity of intention without double-dealing, acrimony or malice. "Thy eyes are as those of doves," says the spouse in the Canticle, that is, pure and simple. Let these be the model of your rectitude of intention.—*Baxter: Meditations.*

"In your patience possess ye your souls." St. Augustine defines patience as "a virtue which enables us to endure with tranquillity the misfortunes of life, whatever they may be." Patience has various degrees; by the first we bear pain rather than offend God; by the second we accept trials with calm and resignation; by the third we ardently desire to suffer for the love of God. Our dear Lady practiced patience in its highest degree. Her life was full of sorrows, which she accepted joyfully as a means of imitating her divine Son. Look at our patient Mother standing on Calvary, suffering as no creature ever suffered, and yet so gentle, so forgiving to Jesus' persecutors, so perfectly calm because her patience had its source in her burning love of God.—*Madame Cecilia: Mater Mea.*

"My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Mary could have said in union with Jesus, "My meat and drink is to do the will of my Father." It was this spiritual joy that ever sustained her. Repulsed from door to door in the chill December

night, "it is His will." Toiling across the barren sands, . . . a stranger among the idolaters of Egypt, "it is His will." Following the blood-stained footsteps of her Son, childless and desolate at the third hour, "it is His will," . . . and yet even now, *"Exultavit Spiritus meus."—Father Humphrey: Mary Magnifying God.*

Be bright and cheerful. Forget yourself and strive to make others happy.

Oh, how many wonderful examples of obedience to the will of God our glorious Lady has left us throughout the whole course of her life, and in her marriage with St. Joseph and her flight into Egypt!

"Whither are you going, O glorious Virgin! with that pretty little Child?"

"I am going to Egypt," she will say.

"But what makes you go there?"

"The will of God."

"Shall you be long away?"

"Just as long as God wills."

"And when shall you return?"

"When He shall bid me."

"When you do come back, will you not be more joyful than now that you are going?"

"No, certainly not."

"But why?"

"Because in going there, and in remaining there, I shall be doing the will of God, as well as in returning."

"But when you return you will go again into your own country?"

"Ah!" she will answer you, "I have no country but this, to do in all things the will of God."—*St. Francis de Sales: Our Lady's Book of Days.*

The chief thing for us to remember, as the sure basis of our devotion, is that Mary's power with Our Lord is still the same as it was during His life upon earth; for natural feelings are not destroyed in glory, but are exalted and perfected. Therefore, the most Blessed Virgin need never fear a refusal: Christ's own love pleads on the side of Mary's prayers, for the human nature which He assumed appeals to Him in her; and so we have, ever pleading our cause with God, that most powerful of all human advocates—a Mother at the feet of her Son. —*Bossuet.*

Zeal for souls is of no merit if we do not love our own community: it is only a delusion; charity begins at home. There are a great many commandments and counsels to keep; but all the Fathers of the Church are agreed that St. John was right when he said, that "if we love one another we have fulfilled the law." We can not love Jesus Christ whom we can not see, if we do not love one another whom we do see. "Judge not, and you shall not be judged." There will be no "judgment" for those who never judged others; they will go straight to the Sacred Heart. Suppose when looking at a dead sister, we remembered her unkind judgments of others, oh! how we should tremble as we prayed for her soul!—*Father Dignam, S.J.: Retreats.*

It is our privilege that our life is one of *drudgery;* by this we earn our highest reward, so that we ought to be *bright.* The devil makes a nest, and lays his eggs in a gloomy heart; he loves darkness. We should be free from all desires that take away the peace of our souls. Sometimes we let very small things destroy our peace. We must be active, al-

ways ready to help others, and to have our orders changed, and not confine our activity to work that we like. We should be gentle, unobtrusive in our charity; quiet and calm in our exterior and heart.—*Ibid.*

Make it the fixed purpose of your life to make all others happy as far as it is in your power, and so (for that will be necessary) to put self out of view altogether. This then ought to be the first thought on awakening: "Dear Mother, for thy honor I will take care that everybody who speaks to me to-day shall go away happier." This thought ought to be the first in your examen at night: "How many have I failed to make happy to-day?"—*Ibid.*

We presume to arrogate to ourselves the power of deciding what we will tolerate, and what we will not. "I can stand this, but I can't stand that." Some can not bear this defect, and some can not bear that; some can't stand meanness, some can't stand untruths, some can't stand rudeness; and so on. But, if we look within ourselves, we shall find very often that the faults we condemn so in others are either fully developed, or, at the least, latent in our hearts. I remember one of our fathers once saying, that what he condemned in other priests, he was certain to find sooner or later in himself; he said, "There were three things I was terribly down upon, and all three of them I have had to acknowledge, and bear in myself." I remember the story about some negroes; when they quarrel they always finish by calling each other, "Oh, you black nigger!" This is the way with us—we are severe, and down upon others for faults and defects hardly more glaring than our own. Who are we that we should dare to

make laws as to what is to be tolerated, and what punished? Poor, weak, miserable, little, wretched creatures, hanging by the thread of God's infinite, loving, patient, tender compassion! There is not one of us that is not capable of committing any fault, no matter how serious or grave. If we have true humility, we shall never fail in charity; for charity and humility are twin sisters; they go hand in hand. —*Father Dignam: Retreats.*

Every human being is continually panting for happiness, the good and the wicked are alike desirous of gaining it, but they seek for it by different means. Christ, therefore, commences His Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes, as if He were to say, you all desire to be happy; listen then, and I will point out the ways that lead to felicity. Do you, therefore, take care to set your affections on this true happiness, and seek for it by the means which Christ points out. Christ honored eight virtues which are contemptible in the eyes of the world, with the titles of beatitudes. He has made these so many steps by which we may ascend to heaven in order to enjoy our ultimate and everlasting happiness. These are poverty of spirit, meekness, sorrow for sins, hunger and thirst after justice, mercy, purity of heart, the making of peace both with God and men, and the suffering of persecutions for Christ's sake. You must ascend these steps, if you wish to enter into the joys of your Lord. "Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee; in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps" (Ps. lxxxiii. 6).—*Baxter: Meditations.*

"Blessed are the merciful" (Matt. v. 7). "He went about doing good, and healing all" (Acts x.

38). "He was teaching daily in the Temple" (Luke xix. 47). "Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28). Consider the reward attached to works of mercy. "They shall obtain mercy." This mercy will accompany them in this life, it will extend to both body and soul, and it will be their reward in the next life: "With the same measure that you shall measure it shall be measured to you again" (Luke vi. 38). Reflect how much you stand in need of God's mercy, and what your case would have been had God dealt with you according to your deserts. Be merciful, therefore, to others, that you may obtain mercy. Meditate on the sentence of St. James: "Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy" (James ii. 13).—*Baxter: Meditations.*

Our divine Lord loves the poor sufferers in purgatory with an infinite love, and ardently desires to receive them into heaven. Let us try to gain many indulgences to-day for those who, while on earth, most loved and honored His Sacred Heart.—*Forget-Me-Nots from Many Gardens.*

Silence kept in a spirit of devotion brings great solace to the suffering souls. There are few who do not sin by the tongue, and purgatory is filled with souls who suffer for having given that member too much liberty. Offer to-day for their relief some acts of self-denial.—*Ibid.*

The Lord declares him "accursed who does His work negligently." What a dreadful thing to appear before Him with imperfect works!—prayers

said without devotion, the Divine Office recited with distraction, meditations made without fruit! Let us pray to-day for those who are suffering for such offenses.—*Ibid.*

Let us assist at Mass and offer a communion frequently for the relief of priests and Religious detained in purgatory. We read in the life of the Venerable Mary of Antigua that a nun of her convent, having died, appeared to her, and said: "Why is it that you do not offer for me and for the other souls the Stations of the Cross?" The servant of God remained in suspense at these words, when she heard Our Lord say to her: "The exercise of the Way of the Cross is so profitable to the souls in purgatory that this soul has come to ask it of you in the name of all. The *Via Crucis* is a suffrage of great importance for these souls. By offering it for them you will have them as so many protectors, who will pray for you and defend your cause before My justice. Tell your Sisters to rejoice in this treasure and the precious capital they have in it, that they may profit by it." It is the common opinion of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church that those who fervently and perseveringly interest themselves for the souls in purgatory will not be lost. O security to be desired!—*Ibid.*

A short offering which may be made each morning for the souls in purgatory: O my God! Deign to accept my every thought, word, and action, as a loving petition to Thy mercy in behalf of the suffering souls in purgatory, particularly ——. I unite to Thy sacred Passion the trials and contradictions of this day, which I purpose to bear with patience in

expiation for the sins and infidelities which detain Thy children in the purifying flames of purgatory. —*Ibid.*

In the morning and often during the day, kiss your crucifix and say: "My Jesus, I thank Thee for having died on the cross for my sins; have mercy on me, and save my soul!" When you behold the three nails of the crucifix, think of the three vows by which you are crucified with Christ as a victim of love. The life of a Religious is a continual death. Let your life be hidden with Christ in God. Be faithful to your religious promise; faithful to your holy Rule, which is the expression of God's will, and pray in the spirit of the Seraphic St. Francis: "O good Jesus, may the sweet flame of Thy love consume in my heart whatever is displeasing to Thee, so that I may die to self and the world for love of Thee, who hast vouchsafed to die for love of me!"

O souls! seek a refuge, like pure doves, in the shadow of the cross. There mourn the Passion of your divine Spouse, and drawing from your hearts tears of compassionate love and repentance make of them a precious balm with which to anoint the wounds of your Saviour.—*St. Paul of the Cross.*

"Intra tua vulnera, absconde me." Within Thy wounds hide me. As of old Moses hid in the cleft of the rock and was there protected by God's right hand, so may I be hidden in Thy sacred wounds, the clefts in the Rock of ages. Within Thy wounds, hide me, Saviour, that henceforth my life may be hidden with Thee in God.—*Madame Cecilia: Retreat Manual.*

When you are alone, take your crucifix, kiss its five wounds reverently, tell it to preach you a little sermon, and then listen to the words of eternal life that it speaks to your heart; listen to the pleading of the thorns, the nails, the precious blood. Oh, what an eloquent sermon!—*St. Paul of the Cross: Flowers of the Passion.*

In temptation say: "O my Jesus, through Thy Passion and death, give me the victory over this temptation." Take your crucifix, kiss it devoutly while the temptation lasts, and rest assured that you will not sin.—*Ibid.*

When I lie down to rest at night, I will think that I shall perhaps die that very night. I will then make a fervent act of contrition for my sins, kiss the crucifix, and say: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."—*Ibid.*

We prove our attachment to God more in suffering a great deal for His sake than in working a great deal for His glory.—*St. Alphonsus Liguori: Victories of the Martyrs; Introd.*, § 2.

Behold the skull and cross-bones at the foot of the crucifix; what is the origin and meaning of this representation? The *American Ecclesiastical Review* answers this question: "According to a very old tradition (Detzel, *Iconographie*, Ch. IV., p. 422), Adam, the father of the human race, was buried on the spot where Our Lord died. A similar tradition has it that a sprig of the tree of life which Adam took from paradise and planted as a lasting remembrance of his transgression in the place where he wished to be buried, became the wood from which the

cross of Our Saviour was fashioned. Thus the tomb of Adam was identified with the spot on the mount of Calvary on which the cross was raised. So art has represented it for centuries, and the skull and bones of our first parent are placed there to indicate that they (and the whole race of man) receive new life through the death of Christ: *'Ecce resurgit Adam cui dat Deus in cruce vitam.'* (Inscript. cruc., in the Cathedral of Chur, in St. Ulricus at Augsburg, etc.)"

Pray and make sacrifices for the conversion of the whole human race; for love of Jesus crucified aid the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. There are in the world over one thousand millions of men and women in pagan and non-Catholic countries who are laboring in darkness and the shadow of death, who do not love the Sacred Heart of Jesus, because they do not know Him. Jesus thirsts for souls. For love of the Sacred Heart help, and interest others in, the work of Catholic missions.

Silence sets us free from many sins, which one is liable to commit in speech. "He that keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from distress" (Prov. xxi. 23). "Blessed is he that hath not slipped with his tongue" (Ecclus. xxv. 11); "for the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison" (James iii. 6, 8). Do I keep the Rule of silence, that I may beware of many sins? Am I especially careful not to sin by words against charity? Silence allows us time for reflection and is a companion to prudence. Am I wont well to consider things ere I set to work? Unless one keeps his soul collected and composed, he can not be united with God in the sweet bonds of love,

he can not listen to His words nor speak with Him, he can not say, with the spouse of Solomon's canticle: "My Beloved to me and I to Him (Cant. ii. 16). "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth and a door roundabout my lips" (Ps. cxl. 3), that I may shun all useless or hurtful speech and ever live in religious composure. O Lord! may I ever be mindful of the words of the Holy Ghost: "He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his soul; but he that hath no guard on his speech, shall meet with evils both here and hereafter" (Prov. xiii. 3).—*Lescoubier: Monthly Recollection.*

Blessed are the actions enclosed between two "Hail Marys!"—*St. Alphonsus Liguori.*

"May Thy will be done!" That is what the saints had continually on their lips and in their hearts.—*St. Alphonsus: Advice to Religious.*

All perfection consists in the love of God; and the perfection of divine love consists in the union of our will with that of God.—*St. Alphonsus: Conformity to the Will of God,* § 1.

The ejaculatory prayers most pleasing to God are acts of love, resignation, and offering of one's self. —*True Spouse:* Ch. XX.

May the two names, so sweet and so powerful, of Jesus and Mary, be always in our hearts and on our lips.—*Glories of Mary:* Pt. I. Ch. X.

If you wish to suffer in peace, say, I am making my purgatory.

It is good to meditate upon the last things, death, judgment, eternity; but let us above all meditate upon the Passion of Christ.—*St. Alphonsus: Advice to Religious.*

I must remember that I am always obliged to do whatever my Superiors command me, and that I may do it without anxiety if only it be not evidently against the law of God. St. Teresa, being once in doubt about something, was told by Our Lord: "My child, you can never be wrong in obeying." O Lord, teach me perfect obedience that I may be ever ready to say, with Thy blessed Mother: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to His word." In view of death, can I repeat the words which St. Peter spoke to Jesus: "We have done what Thou hast commanded us; what reward wilt Thou give us?" If I want to be able to speak thus at the hour of my death, what have I to change in my life? What must I amend, if I want confidently to expect death and the everlasting reward of heaven? "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake shall receive a hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting" (Matt. xix. 29). Keep your heart pure, do well your daily works and sanctify them by the intention to perform them solely for the love of God: *"Ad majorem Dei Gloriam,"* and you will become a saint.—*Lescoubier: Monthly Recollection.*

Am I ready for death? If I had to die at the present moment, would I have no fear of being lost? But if to-day I deserve hell, shall I deserve heaven to-morrow? Besides, the morrow is uncertain: I do not know whether to-morrow I shall be alive.

I will then take care, this very moment; I will elicit an act of perfect contrition over my past sins and begin a new life. Which way am I walking? Am I on the road of pride and disobedience? On the road of self-indulgence and guilty pleasure? On the road of self-will and ambition? On the road of sloth and carelessness? This very day I will leave that road, lest it bring me to "the place of torments" (Luke xvi. 28).—*Ibid.*

Meditate often and seriously on the happiness of heaven. Such meditations, besides deepening our knowledge of God, and of the things He has prepared for them that love Him, have a wonderful power of detaching our hearts from the transitory pleasures and honors of this world. They, moreover, create in our soul an unquenchable thirst for the vision and possession of God, while they infuse into us a new courage to battle manfully against all the obstacles which beset our path in the practice of virtue.

Such meditations fill us, moreover, with a laudable and noble ambition of reaching a high degree of union with God. This was the ambition of the saints, and it should be ours also. It was this desire of a most intimate union with God, that caused them to deny themselves even the most innocent pleasures of this world, and to undergo sufferings, the bare recital of which makes our poor nature shudder. They knew that "our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17).—*Boudreaux: The Happiness of Heaven.*

In the thirty-seventh chapter of her Life, St. Teresa speaks thus: "I would not lose, through any fault of mine, the least degree of further enjoyment in heaven. I even go so far as to declare that, if the choice were offered to me whether I would rather remain subject to all the afflictions of the world, even to the end of it, and then ascend, by that means, to the possession of a little more glory in heaven; or else, without any affliction at all, enjoy a little less glory, I would most willingly accept all the troubles and afflictions for a little more enjoyment, that so I might understand a little more of the greatness of God; because I see that he who understands more of Him, loves and praises Him so much the more." Here is the ambition of a great saint. It is not after crowns or scepters, or the glory of this world that she sighs, but after a single degree of higher enjoyment in heaven; and to obtain that she is willing to remain suffering in this wretched world to the end of time. Let such be your ambition in the future. If not in so sublime a degree, let it, at least, be directed only to the acquisition of "treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal" (Matt. vi. 19). Labor incessantly for that "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that can not fade, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. i. 4). "Be faithful unto death," says Our Lord Jesus Christ, "and I will give thee the crown of life" (Apoc. ii. 10).—*Boudreaux: Ibid.*

"The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture." "Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me." "And

Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life." —*Ps.* xxii.

"In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded." "Bow down Thy ear to me; make haste to deliver me." "Be Thou unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge to save me." "I have hoped in the Lord; I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy." "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant, save me in Thy mercy."—*Ps.* xxx.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

Fiat, laudetur atque in æternum superexaltetur justissima, altissima et amabilissima voluntas Dei in omnibus.

May the most just, most high, and most amiable will of God be done in all things, be praised and magnified forever!

Addenda.

Regarding Special Confessors of Religious Communities

Father McNicholas, O.P., says: By the *special* confessor of nuns is not meant the *ordinary*, nor the *extraordinary*, as we understand the extraordinary, but one that is sought whenever some special need is felt by the individual to unburden herself to some priest appointed for this purpose. If the predominant thought of the penitent were a consideration of his or her offenses against God, united with a profound sorrow and an earnest entreaty for forgiveness, and ruled by charity, the personality of the confessor might be an unknown quantity. We face, however, the fact which often defies analysis, that we can open entirely our conscience to one confessor and can unhesitatingly subject our actions and motives to his most searching scrutiny, while to another, who may be more sympathetic and kind, an undefinable something prevents an open and free manifestation. Too many priests do not give this fact sufficient consideration when dealing with nuns as penitents. How many priests, even, are there who can say, "It makes no difference to whom I go to confession"? And priests, as a rule, are not looking for direction or directors in the choice of their confessor. St. Thomas says that a confessor would sin who would not willingly grant to a penitent permission to confess to another, because many penitents would rather indefinitely postpone confession than confess to certain priests. Conscience is a delicate thing. We cannot form it as we do a table or a vase.

It does not work automatically; but human life-strings, which unexpectedly pull in this or that direction, rule it. The difficulties referred to will exist as long as the personality of the confessor means what it does, as long as spirituality makes tender consciences, as long as persons consecrated to the service of God are human, as long as nuns are nuns.*

Since the recent decree of the Congregation of the Council† urges that daily Communion be promoted in all religious communities, and, as a matter of fact, since the Holy Father's wish has been carried out in many of the convents of nuns, the provision by our Bishops of special confessors becomes more imperative.

As stated in my first paper,‡ only one ordinary confessor is to be appointed for a community, and, as his designation signifies, he alone is to hear regularly the confessions of its members. For the same community, however, there may be several special confessors§ (*confessarii adjuncti*). According to the general law of the Church, special confessors of sisterhoods, or of communities that make profession of simple or perpetual vows, do not require the special approbation which must be given for nuns of solemn vows.¶ The particular law, however, of most dioceses requires special approbation, and this *"ad validitatem."*‖

*Consult the Decree *Quemadmodum* regarding the ***special*** confessors of nuns or sisters.

†20 December, 1905, in the *Eccl. Review*, July, 1906, p. 81. See "The Holy Father's Wishes Regarding Daily Communion," *ibidem*, p. 60.

‡*Eccl. Review*, October, 1906, p. 351.

§*Quemadmodum*, n. IV.; *Normæ*, 147.

¶*Inscrutabile Dei*, Gregory XV., 5 February, 1622; *Eccl. Review*, October, 1906; Gennari: *Consultazioni*, I, p. 737.

‖The Visitation Nuns in a few dioceses make solemn profession.

It is to be observed that three recent Papal documents—the *Quemadmodum* (17 Dec., 1890), *Conditæ* (8 Dec., 1899) and *Normæ* (Cong. EE. et RR., 28 June, 1901)—confirm absolutely the provisions of the *"Pastoralis Curæ"* in so far as they regard the confessors of nuns.

The *Quemadmodum* makes further specifications even more favorable to the nuns, declaring (n. IV.): "Moreover, while the prescriptions of the Holy Council of Trent and the decree of Benedict XIV. in his *Pastoralis Curæ* retain their full vigor, His Holiness admonishes prelates and superiors not to deny their subjects an extraordinary confessor as often as the need of their conscience requires it, and this without seeking in any way to find out the reason why their subjects make such a demand, or without showing that they resent it."

As can be seen, the decree *Quemadmodum* (n. IV.) takes hold of the provision of the special confessor in a very practical way by further adding: "Lest so provident a disposition [of the *Pastoralis Curæ*] as this should be made illusory, His Holiness exhorts the ordinaries to name in all localities of their dioceses in which there are communities of women well-qualified priests with the necessary faculties to whom such Religious may easily have recourse to receive the Sacrament of Penance." The *Normæ* confirm this legislation of the special confessor and add: "Where bishops, in compliance with the instructions of the *Quemadmodum*, have appointed the qualified priests with the necessary faculties, superiors may have recourse to these without being obliged to ask the bishop in each case" for a special confessor.—*Ecclesiastical Review, April, 1907.*

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